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The Return of Anakin Skywalker

THE ESCHATOLOGY OF STAR WARS

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As I write this, it is almost two years since **RETURN OF THE JEDI** premiered and about three weeks until its re-release. At the film's climactic moment, Anakin Skywalker, until now overwhelmed by and subsumed in his dark side, Darth Vader, overthrows Vader's dark dominion and saves the life of his son, Luke Skywalker. In doing so, he is himself mortally injured. He dies, is given a hero's funeral pyre by his son, and, at the film's end, reappears in the company of the other two fully trained Jedi, Yoda and Obi-Wan Kenobi.

A happy ending, and one that opened the way to controversy about its nature and meaning--and not just in active fandom, either. I heard the same arguments among decidedly non-fannish co-workers and from fannish but not media-oriented members of my apa (amateur press association). While the crux

of the argument is a very specific worldview, I have heard it advanced by people who claim to reject the worldview on which their argument is based.

This basic argument is that Anakin Skywalker didn't deserve a happy ending because his crimes as Darth Vader were too heinous to be atoned for by the single act of saving his son's life or killing the Emperor. Discussions have tended to focus on whether Anakin did, in fact, deserve to be "saved," to use the word he himself used.

Behind this argument there is a whole set of unvoiced eschatological arguments. An "eschatology" is a system of beliefs about the nature of death and its aftermath; it is usually associated with religion but can be part of a non-religious philosophy as well. A complete materialist who

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rejects all religions and supernatural phenomena can have an eschatology: the belief that life is no more than an electrochemical phenomenon which ends utterly at death, with no spiritual or intellectual continuation of any sort, is itself an eschatological belief.

The assumptions underlying the eschatological argument that Anakin Skywalker did not deserve to be saved are roughly as follows:

- a. An individual has only one physical (corporeal) existence.
- b. There is an incorporeal soul or spirit, separate from the corporeal body, which houses the individuality and moral being of an intelligent creature. (Within the SW universe, this assumption must be treated as fact.)
- c. This soul, spirit, or whatever survives the physical death of the corporeal body and retains its individuality. (This is provisionally a fact in SW, at least for some individuals).
- d. There is more than one possible fate for the individual soul after death. In simplest terms, the possibilities are bliss and pain. Moreover, these fates are eternal: what happens to the soul immediately after death will happen to it forever.
- e. The fate to which the individual soul is consigned is not random or capricious; it is earned or deserved, presumably by the acts of the individual during physical life.
- f. Eternal bliss (or happiness) is thus equated with reward, and pain (or unhappiness) with punishment, for actions done in physical life.
- g. "Saved" means being spared eternal punishment. (A possible corollary is that the usual fate is punishment, and salvation--being spared punishment--is the extraordinary fate, but I don't think this is a uniform assumption.)
- h. The fate of the individual soul is determined at death by some sort of judgment.
- i. By implication, there is some sort of judge whose identity and nature are not necessarily specified.
- j. There is a standard against which the soul is judged. This standard balances good actions against evil actions and comes up with a sort of cumulative score, which is predominantly good or predominantly evil. The soul's fate is assigned accordingly.
- k. There is a universal and objective definition

of good and of evil.

1. There are degrees of good and evil in actions. That is, some good actions are better than other good actions, and similarly, some evil actions are worse than other evil actions.
- m. Counterbalancing a lot of evil actions requires a lot of good actions or a few spectacularly good ones.

When it's broken out (and it could be defined even more narrowly), this set of assumptions is clearly recognizable as the Judeo-Christian worldview. I prefer Joseph Campbell's less loaded term, "Levantine," however, as this set of assumptions characterizes all the religions that began in the Middle East--Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Zoroastrianism, and their variants.(1)

The set of assumptions behind the claim that Anakin does not deserve to be saved is not shared by everyone on this planet. Even if it were, the question would be whether it characterizes the SW universe (which is not the same thing as whether it reflects George Lucas' personal belief, by the way), and thus, whether Anakin's fate is invalid within that universe.

If we assume for a moment that the SW universe does have a Levantine eschatology, there is an explanation within that framework for Anakin's happy ending. Despite all the assumptions set out above, the Levantine tradition does allow a life of evil to be redeemed by a single act. Human beings, including those of us raised in Levantine traditions, almost universally believe that the noblest action any person can take is sacrificing his or her own life to save the life of another person, and that such a sacrifice can make up for a great deal of evil. In theory, the worth of the life saved does not matter. Most philosophies assign the same moral base value to all individuals, the difference being that in the West that value is infinite and in the East, it's essentially zero (because the ultimate aim is cessation of individuality). In practice, of course, we assign different worths to different individuals, especially politically.

(1) Judiasm, one could add, is less concerned than other Levantine religions with the afterlife and more concerned with right actions during life, but it shares many of the eschatological assumptions of the Levantine worldview as ethical assumptions.

But Vader/Anakin is not acting in the political or even the mythological realm when he attacks the Emperor. He is acting personally, as a father responding to his son's cry for help. He surely did consider that the Emperor has just announced that Vader is going to be replaced, but the whole point of the scene is Darth Vader's response to his son and by it his reversion to Anakin Skywalker. From this point of view, Anakin is saved (in the Levantine sense) because he gave his own life that Luke might live, not because he saved Luke's life *per se* and certainly not because he killed the Emperor.

There's another system within the Levantine framework by which a single action, in fact, a single decision, can save a person in the eschatological sense, no matter what he or she has done to that point. Protestant Christianity, particularly the more conservative varieties, holds that it is only that decision, not any good acts one can do, that saves one, and if the decision is genuine, which is between the individual and the deity, the slate is wiped clean. This doctrine has unfortunate consequences, but it does provide an example of an existing belief system that allows eternal salvation on the basis of one act of will.

(To show that this idea isn't even exclusively Levantine, one can cite a similar one in Mahayana Buddhism, the variety most common in Japan. A truly wicked, worthless individual, guilty of many crimes, can "mutter (the) name" of the Buddha 10 times on his deathbed. On his death, he will see a brilliant golden lotus, which will enclose him. Eventually, after absorbing (by osmosis?) the influence of the radiant lotus lake, he will be given, and accept, the chance to become a Buddha. Now this version is influenced by Zoroastrianism, a Levantine religion, and it does imply that some change continues after death. However, it does not involve punishment, remorse, atonement, or even apology for the crimes committed in life.)

But let's go back to the question of whether we are evaluating Anakin's fate with appropriate standards. For that matter, are we understanding what happens to Anakin appropriately? In other words, is the SW universe a Levantine universe?

George Lucas (et al) has given us very little direct information about the eschatology (or -gies) of the SW universe. What there is indicates that it may not be Levantine, in the main. Some of the important sources of the SW movies were not West-

ern. George Lucas himself has admitted that Kurosawa's samurai movies, especially **THE HIDDEN FORTRESS**, were major influences on SW. In **SKYWALKING** and in an interview on the Los Angeles radio show **HOOR 25** in June 1983, Dale Pollock says that Lucas told him that Carlos Castaneda's **TALES OF POWER**, which is decidedly non-Levantine, was a major source for the Force and Yoda's Jedi teachings.

This is not to say that there are no Levantine elements in SW. The speech of Han Solo, for instance, hints at Levantine-like beliefs. Han uses the words "damn(ed)" and "hell" as curses. While this doesn't necessarily mean that he believes in a literal damnation and hell, it does mean that these concepts exist for the humans' language to have words for them, and that they have negative connotations. Han also says, "I'll see you in hell!" This may be a rhetorical device for expressing frustration and anger, like "God damn it!" or "Damn it to hell!" used by people who don't even think about what the words mean, let alone believe them literally. However, these words and their context again imply that at least some of this universe recognizes "hell" as a physical place in which one may find oneself after death, with the corollary that individual consciousness survives death.

Han's use of "May the Force be with you" is also interesting; that particular phrase, according to Pollack, is an adaptation of a Christian benediction ("May the Lord be with you, and with your house").(2) It implies that the Force has a choice in the matter and thus that the Force has certain characteristics usually imputed to consciousness. That is, it implies that Han sees the Force as anthropomorphic (as do some of his earlier remarks about it). This may mean that he does see it that way, or that he doesn't really know what it is and is interpreting it in terms of what he does know--and that interpretation fits with his use of "damn" and "hell" and so on. Or he may simply be

(2) The Jedi use the phrase "The Force will be (or is) with you, always." Now this is also an adaptation of a Christian benediction ("For lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world"). But for the Jedi, it is also a statement of fact, and in at least one of its uses (Obi-Wan to Luke in ANH), it appears to be a reassurance that Luke can use the Force even though Obi-Wan isn't with him.

repeating a stock phrase he has heard and that he knows has meaning to Luke.

Of course, we have no idea how common or current are the concepts behind Han's use of these words. They may be leftovers from an older belief system used throughout the galaxy; they may reflect the beliefs only of Han's home planet or system; they may represent an existing alternative belief system.(3)

An "alternative belief system" would usually be considered one that is an alternative to the dominant (most common, powerful, etc.) belief system. In the SW universe, however, a belief system may be an alternative to the one that is demonstrably true--matches "reality"--even if the "true" one is not dominant. I suggest that the Jedi belief system is "true" in that sense because we, the audience, have been shown that it works (and so have skeptics within the films!). The Jedi beliefs as expressed in the words Yoda and Obi-Wan Kenobi use to teach Luke, correspond to what we have been shown of reality in the SW universe. Of the beliefs stated or implied, they are the only ones we know do so. For this reason, I'm going to assume that the Jedi interpretation of their universe is not a belief, something that is held as a matter of faith but cannot be empirically proved, but what we would call knowledge or science.

This does not necessarily mean that the Jedi have the only true explanation of their universe, only that theirs does, in fact, correspond to reality.(4) This puts the SW universe one up on ours--

(3) The Ewoks have the concept "god" and by implication--they think 3PO is a god--they recognize more than one deity. However, it's clear that theirs is an alternative and limited belief system. We can probably assume that the Ewoks haven't had much intercourse with other races, except those whose representatives ended up on Endor.

(4) At least one belief system--the Ewoks'--can be shown to be a subset of the Jedi system, but we don't know about any others. Through the use of the Force, Luke can lend 3PO the appearance of having what the Ewoks consider godlike powers. The action (the powers) exists, so the Ewoks are right in believing that there are such powers; it's only their interpretation, that these powers proclaim a god, that is faulty. If it is faulty; the difference between science and religion is sometimes only a matter of definition of term.

we can't even demonstrate that one of our many belief systems matches reality.

It is this interpretation of the SW universe and its implied eschatological concepts that appears to be non-Levantine. In particular, the Levantine ideas missing are an anthropomorphic (or other) deity or judge, a judgment after death that results in reward or punishment for actions taken in life, and concepts of sin and theological guilt.

In other words, the conditions for our Levantine interpretation of Anakin Skywalker's fate aren't there. The assumptions we unconsciously make about who deserves "salvation" and why do not correspond to the "reality" of the SW movies. We read them into the movies because they reflect our own beliefs. Even the concepts of "salvation" or "redemption," with all their Levantine implications, are inappropriate to SW. Though I have used them myself in the past, I now think I was wrong to do so. Mea culpa, says the daughter of the Levant.

If the eschatological assumptions of the SW universe are not those of the Levantine world, what are they? I think they can be delineated roughly as follows:

- a. There is an energy field of some sort, however one defines it exactly, that permeates all living things, at least, in the universe. The Jedi call this energy field the Force.(5)
- b. This energy field, the Force, is impersonal, rather like a force of nature. As the Jedi describe it, there is no hint of personality, consciousness, or any of the usual attributes of a deity, anthropomorphic or otherwise.
- c. The Force surrounds "us," presumably living beings, and binds us together.(6)

(5) I think one could devise an explanation of the Force that was consistent with our own universe and remarkably close to what we are told of the SW movies, based on contemporary subatomic (quantum) physics. This notion may simply reflect my limited understanding of quantum physics, of course, and at any rate it's another article entirely.

(6) Perhaps the Force also constitutes us and the rest of the universe. Einstein's famous equation, $E=mc^2$, tells us that matter and energy are mathematically, and under certain circumstance physically, synonymous. Mathematically, then, we are all energy, and energy is the interplay of fields of force. "Luminous beings are we," to quote Yoda.

- d. The Force can be apprehended intuitively and perhaps rationally.
- e. The Force can be employed to manipulate the physical world.
- f. The Force has a dark, or evil side, and by implication a light, or good side. The dark side is seductive and easier. However, it is unclear whether the dark and light "sides" actually exist as entities. There are hints in Yoda's teachings and in Luke's experiences on Dagobah and Endor that the dark and light sides of the Force are the use one makes of it and the attitude with which one approaches it. I.e., the dark and the light sides reflect the psychological and moral state of the Force-sensitive person. In this case, the Force itself is morally neutral, like the force of gravity. On the other hand, the dark side may have a separate existence: the tree in TESB is said to be strong with the dark side of the Force. One could speculate that the tree, a living entity, is sensitive to the Force and sufficiently conscious to choose the dark side over the light side. Such an explanation wouldn't be unprecedented. Tolkein did something similar in *THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING*, some Eastern religions assign a moral value to all living things, and some physicists speculate that everything in the universe may be conscious in some sense.
- g. There is more than one acceptable path through life. "He has to follow his own path," says Leia to Luke.
- h. Not all paths, however, are acceptable--Darth Vader's and the Emperor's are clearly unacceptable to the surviving Jedi. It is unclear to whom or what a path (action, etc.) must be acceptable; possibly to the Jedi, as the guardians of peace and justice. Possibly we don't have enough information yet about the SW universe--or possibly this is an inconsistency.
- i. The "real nature" of beings is not "crude matter," but "luminous." It is not clear whether the "luminous beings" include all sentient creatures or only Jedi.

Before we can continue from these background assumptions to what happens at death in the SW universe--that is, to its actual eschatology--a caveat is in order. We have seen death in this universe only in limited circumstances. We know in any de-

tail only what happens to powerful, trained Jedi, which is not necessarily what happens to everyone else. In this sense, the eschatology that follows is the eschatology of the Jedi. It appears to be different in some respects from what happens to non-Jedi; whether it actually does, and by how much, we don't know, because of the limited and special circumstances in which people have died in the movies so far. It seems unlikely, given the SW movies' general tone and philosophy, that the Jedi are so different from other intelligent beings that what happens to them at death is radically different from what happens to everyone else: that is, that they alone have life after death. The difference may be one of degree rather than kind. And they, or some of them, may know what happens to them at death, unlike other beings.

That is: though we see only a small sample, we can infer from people's reactions to the death of someone close to them that they regard death much as our culture does: as something awful, something that cuts off contact between the dead and the living and thus as a matter of pain and grief for survivors. Luke grieves for the deaths of his aunt and uncle and of Obi-Wan; the Ewok in ROTJ grieves for the death of a fallen companion. Whatever the Jedi may know, the "ordinary people" of this universe may not be aware of it. Of course, if the Jedi have been all but extinct for a generation and their teachings regarded (officially?) as superstition or religion, as indicated by the remarks of Motti and Tarkin in ANH, this lack of awareness may be a new thing in the world.

These caveats acknowledged, what have we seen of death in the SW universe? We have seen the deaths of three Jedi, one (apparently) non-Jedi Force user, and a lot of non-Jedi, non-Force users. The last group has in common that they all have died suddenly and in unnatural circumstances. They seem to have died as we understand the term, too: their bodies stop working but remain physically present and their consciousness dissipates. It is implied that their deaths can be felt in the Force by one sensitive to them. However, there is no indication that non-Jedi can be perceived after death even by Jedi (thus the trauma and grief to survivors). Nor can they apparently manifest themselves through their own efforts.

As far as we know, this is also what happens to the Emperor, the non-Jedi Force user, except that his body is presumably destroyed. (On the

other hand, I wouldn't want to bet on the Emperor's current state being permanent. I keep thinking of Sauron in LORD OF THE RINGS.)

But the deaths of the three Jedi, Obi-Wan, Yoda, and Anakin, are different. (Anakin, of course, actually dies off-screen, so one must extrapolate in his case.) To begin with, none died suddenly. And when they left the corporeal world, in whatever fashion, their bodies left with them. In two cases, we see this happen: Yoda's body disappears on screen in TESB, and Obi-Wan's has clearly already vanished when Vader strikes him with the lightsaber in ANH. What was left of Anakin's body may have disappeared: at the end of ROTJ, his funeral pyre appears to contain only the armor of Darth Vader; the part of Anakin/Vader that was still flesh and blood--or at least bone!--his partial torso(?) does not seem to be there.

Most important, all three of the Jedi could be perceived after their deaths, at least by a fellow Jedi. Both Yoda and Luke could see and hear Obi-Wan, and Luke saw all three at the end of ROTJ. (I suspect it is actually the dead Jedi who are making themselves known, not the live Jedi who chooses to perceive them. There isn't any evidence that Luke, or Yoda, can contact Obi-Wan at will; of course, this is evidence by omission, but there's none in the other direction, either.) And the Jedi who have passed over glow, as if surrounded by an aura or halo. They are "luminous beings," in Yoda's words, and, by implication, what they really are. This is an example of how the Jedi knowledge corresponds to what really happens. It is also an example of the direct (in fact, almost word-for-word) influence of Castaneda's TALES OF POWER, which devotes an entire chapter to "The Secret of the Luminous Beings."

These Jedi can no longer directly have a hand in what happens in the corporeal world, but by influencing individuals who can perceive them, they can indirectly influence events. In this way, they may even have more power than they did when they

(7) At the moment when Vader lifts the Emperor and the Emperor's powerbolts are directed at him, a skull and upper chest skeleton are superimposed briefly on his armor. I am assuming that this means Vader/Anakin still has these parts of his original body. Because no other skeletal parts are implied in such fashion, I am further assuming that what is shown is all that is left.

were alive, in a manner of speaking (from a certain point of view...). Had Obi-Wan been still "in the flesh," he couldn't have been with Luke in the x-wing over the Death Star and probably couldn't have reminded Luke to use the Force at just the right moment. Without that reminder, Luke would probably have relied on mechanical methods of timing and targeting, as the other pilots did, and failed as they did.

Based on what we have seen on screen, then, I propose that Yoda, Obi-Wan, and Anakin may not be "dead" as we and the SW universe understand the word. They are no longer part of the corporeal universe, however, and their state seems to be permanent, so they can be called "dead"; for all intents and purposes, they are. A parallel is what happens to Robert Heinlein's Martians in **STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND** and **RED PLANET** when they become Old Ones.

Further, the three Jedi chose the moments of their deaths; they were not taken unawares. (This may be one of the key ways in which their deaths differ from those of everyone else in SW.) In his duel with Vader, Obi-Wan stops fighting, looks directly at Luke ("I'm doing this for you, kid"), then closes his eyes and strikes what appears to be a meditative or strength-gathering pose. His empty clothes begin to fall before Vader strikes him. Similarly, Yoda composes himself as if for sleep, imparts his last message to Luke, then turns away and becomes still. His body fades rather than disappearing abruptly as Obi-Wan's does, perhaps because he has less strength for his translation, perhaps because he does allow his physical body to die or come close to death first. One has to extrapolate again for Anakin, but he certainly was resigned to dying, and there is that apparently empty armor on the pyre.

After death, the Jedi maintain the appearance of physical form: when they appear to Luke, they look as they did in (healthy) corporeal life. And Obi-Wan, at least, maintains the cohesiveness of his personality: he sounds and acts toward Luke as he did in life.

The influence of TALES OF POWER can be seen clearly in this area also. According to Don Juan, the Yaqui teacher of that book, a powerful and properly trained sorcerer (or warrior--a sorcerer is a warrior, a spiritual one, and vice versa) can "leap" into the unknown, nonphysical aspect of reality where one becomes "one" with reality. Not

all sorcerors can do it; not all even know about it. The sorcerer who chooses the leap must also choose whether to return to the physical world, and his choice is irrevocable.

Most sorcerors, says Castaneda, choose not to return, and this is the interesting fate in relation to SW.(8) If a sorcerer does not return from the unknown, for all intents and purposes, he dies. Until this point, he has maintained the unity of his personality and his sense of self. His body--actually, his "double"--remains in the physical reality he has abandoned. But when he makes the decision not to return to that reality, the force (!) that binds the modules of his consciousness together into a self-aware, unified individual is dissipated, and his real body, which has gone with him into the unknown, dissolves. The double, the body left on earth, may also disappear (even after several rereadings, I'm not sure about this). The difference between voluntarily entering the unknown and dying is that when one dies, the dissipation of consciousness happens out of one's control, and one's body remains in the physical world.

Obviously, the SW movies do not simply parrot these ideas but have adapted and added to them.(9)

(8) The sorcerer who chooses to return from the unknown must stay in the world until physical death, and he is supposed to perform his "life tasks" to the best of his ability. Teachers and benefactors of apprentices, for example, are sorcerors who chose to return. This is similar to, and may have been based on, the idea of the "bodhisattva" in Buddhism. The bodhisattva is the person who is capable of achieving nirvana and leaving the sorrowful round of rebirth forever but chooses instead to remain out of compassion and love, to guide others along the way. Karuna, compassion ("suffering with") or love, is thus ideally the highest human virtue in Buddhism, as cari-tas, love ("charity" in the older sense), is in Christianity.

(9) Another difference is that some of the metaphysical and symbolic elements of TALES OF POWER show up in TESB and ROTJ as actual physical realities. A very specific example is "the other." Castaneda devotes several pages to the concept of "the other" as a symbol for certain aspects of the self; the "double" is a physical manifestation of the "other". Don Juan even introduces the concept with the words, "There is another Gennaro!" (Sound

Castaneda says nothing about immaterial manifestations from the unknown, for example, though Don Juan's teachings would allow them. However, if Castaneda's ideas are the major source for the Jedi and the Force in SW, as Pollock claims, they may help explain what happens to Jedi, and specifically to Vader, in ROTJ.

What I think that is should be fairly clear by now. Anakin Skywalker, who has been buried under the powerful psychic presence of Darth Vader,(10) reasserts himself and saves Luke's life by destroying the Emperor. His reemergence is triggered by the discovery that he has a son (which happens off screen) and his growing acceptance of a paternal feeling toward that son. That is, Vader's reversal to Anakin is not sudden. It begins in TESB with the first stirrings of concern for Luke's safety (he protests to the Emperor that Luke is "just a boy") and acknowledgement of kinship with, even pride in, his son.

When he dies, Anakin is not pulled into the otherworld or "saved" by some judgmental power (the Force is impersonal). He translates himself to that

familiar?) To help think about this concept, Don Juan calls it the metaphysical twin. Assuming that TALES OF POWER was Lucas' source, at least partially, we have in SW Leia as the corporeal (and separate) "other" and Luke's physical twin.

(10) Perhaps Vader is an "other" who was so powerful, because he drew on the dark side of the Force, that he overwhelmed Anakin, the "primary" personality. Castaneda says the other, or the double, can be very powerful and correspondingly dangerous if not controlled.

When he destroys the Emperor, he presumably acts with the proper Jedi attitude: dispassionately, as Obi-Wan Kenobi slices off the being's arm in the cantina in ANH, or with a positive emotion, desire to save Luke's life or simple paternal love. But at any rate, the killing is not done out of any of the negative emotions that come from or lead to the Dark Side: anger, hate, revenge, or even a specific desire to kill the Emperor. The Dark Side is what he has just renounced. The Emperor is killed because his death just happens to be at that point the only way to gain Luke's life. And Anakin's own life is forfeit in the process. I suspect he realized this before he acted, and the realization was probably part of his long hesitation in the climactic scene of ROTJ.

world by a conscious effort, like Obi-Wan and Yoda before him. This is not something anyone can do, obviously: it requires a masterful grasp of the Force and a period of preparation, which seems to include attainment of calmness just before translation. Anakin certainly has the time (he knows he is going to die anyway), he has the power within the Force, and, perhaps, without the distorting influence of the Dark Side, he has the ability to clear his mind and attain the necessary passivity.

The nature of the otherworld into which the three Jedi are translated is not even hinted at. We can speculate about what is probably isn't, recognizing that all we are doing is speculating until, when and if George Lucas lets us in on his thinking, but what it is we don't know. It could be like the "unknown" of **TALES OF POWER**, a sort of sea of Force and modules of consciousness but no actual personalities, except those of Jedi who have just translated and have not yet relinquished their individuality to become "one with the Force." It could be that everyone ends up there but only the Jedi can maintain their personalities; or everyone retains individuality and continues to grow intellectually, morally, and emotionally (as in the Buddha Realm of Mahayana Buddhism), but only Jedi can manifest themselves in the corporeal world. It could be a sort of way station until some future physical rebirth. It could very likely be none of the above.

Whatever has happened and happens next to Anakin, Yoda and Obi-Wan (if indeed "next" has any meaning in the state of reality in which they find themselves), I don't think the Levantine, specifically Christian, notion of "salvation" has anything to do with it. The background assumptions, about sin and guilt, reward and punishment, are not present in the "true" interpretation of the SW universe. The closest any Jedi comes to those assumptions is Obi-Wan, when in ROTJ he says that Darth Vader must die (or Luke will have failed in his purpose). Even in that conversation, the fate under discussion is temporal, not eternal. It is also not clear whether Obi-Wan thinks Vader should die as punishment for the evil he has done to stop him from doing any more.

In addition, what has befallen the Jedi has happened because of their own individual choices, not by the grace or judgment of some outside deity. When Anakin tells Luke that Luke has saved him, he is not saying that Luke has given him eternal life

and happiness or kept him from eternal pain and punishment. In the Levantine tradition, this would be tantamount to declaring that Luke is God, or a god, as deity is the only agency that can grant salvation. I really doubt that Luke is a god, any more than 3PO is. I think Anakin means that Luke has saved Anakin from the tyranny of Vader, perhaps even from oblivion (that is, complete erasure of individuality), as one mortal may save another mortal's life.

And even then, Luke has merely provided the means by which Anakin saves himself. Had Vader not allowed the paternal feelings reawakened by Luke to remain and grow, nothing Luke could have done would have enabled Vader to make the final decision by which he reverted--turned again, returned--to Anakin. Luke's final appeal would have gone unheeded, had things even gotten to that point.

So now we have Obi-Wan, Yoda, and Anakin in some state that is possibly not death but translation, corporeal or incorporeal, to a place that may or may not be where everyone ends up, with abilities that are clearly not possessed by non-Jedi.

Some questions remain to be answered in this scenario. Why couldn't Darth Vader, as opposed to Anakin Skywalker, translate himself to the otherworld; for that matter, why did he seem not even to know about it? Why couldn't the Emperor do it? Where are the rest of the Jedi--are Obi-Wan, Yoda, and Anakin the only Jedi in the otherworld?

Any answers are necessarily even more speculative than the rest of this essay, but I can start with the Emperor. The Emperor isn't a Jedi, as far as we know, and he may or may not draw his power from the Force. Voluntary discorporation may be something only the Jedi can do. Also, the Emperor was taken by surprise by Vader's turning on him, and far from using the seconds left to him to compose himself enough to discorporate, he spends them trying to zap Vader, now Anakin.

As for Vader's lack of knowledge, voluntary translation to the otherworld may be something Anakin knew about but lost the knowledge of when he was submerged in Vader. Perhaps being under the control of the dark side clouds certain perceptions, blocks certain passages for power (as in Marion Zimmer Bradley's Darkover books sexual arousal can block the paths of laran). Maybe a person under the influence of the dark side lives in a constant state of low-level anger or hate that cannot be controlled long enough or well enough to

allow attainment of the proper passivity for dis-corporation.

Or maybe fear is the dominant emotion: fear of losing power, because the dark side gives one power on this side, and it gives one immense power. From the other side, it's implied that you can't directly affect events on this side any longer ("If you leave now, I can't help you"), despite Obi-Wan's last words to Vader. And maybe there is nothing to control on the other side, if the only other conscious personalities are Jedi as powerful as yourself, and none of the perquisites of power available on this side. Or perhaps fear prevents a person controlled by the Dark Side from ever choosing death. Such a person will fight to the last instant to stay alive because all their power and pleasure is on this side.

Someone on the Light Side may also fight death up to a point, if they believe that delaying death even a little may accomplish some good that cannot be accomplished at all if they die now. I think this is why Luke does not immediately submit passively to the Emperor's fire at the end of ROTJ, though he has clearly put himself at the mercy of the Emperor, and by doing so shown himself ready to die rather than turn to the dark, as he was ready to die on Bespin. But by staying alive just a little longer, especially in agony under the Emperor's bolts as Anakin watches, Luke has one final chance of getting through to his father. And, of course, he does.

Finally, there are the rest of the Jedi. The easiest answer is that we simply don't know. We don't even know if all the Jedi know about what Obi-Wan and Yoda did and Anakin may have done, and, of course, many of the Jedi who died at the hands of the Empire must have died suddenly and with no time to prepare. Another plausible answer is that the Jedi have gone over to the otherworld but, if they retain individuality, don't choose to manifest themselves in SW. This isn't their story, after all.

This essay has necessarily been speculative in many respects, but its speculation, I hope, has been based on what we have seen in the SW movies and inferences from some of their avowed sources. I make no claim to be definitive (readers will undoubtedly have noticed the plethora of qualifiers), let alone "right."

I do hope, however, that I've shown that a non-Levantine interpretation of "life, the universe and everything" in SW is at least plausible and that our judgments about the validity of Anakin Skywalker's fate may therefore be based on our pre-conceptions about the SW universe (that it is, or more to the point, should be, essentially Levantine like the one almost all of us have grown up in) as much as on what it seems to be. In other words, on a certain point of view.

REFERENCES

STAR WARS films:

A NEW HOPE (written and directed by George Lucas)

THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK (written by Leigh Brackett and Larry Kasdan, story by George Lucas; directed by Irvin Kershner)

RETURN OF THE JEDI (written by Larry Kasdan and George Lucas, story by George Lucas and Larry Kasdan; directed by Richard Marquand)

Interview with Dale Pollock, HOUR 25, June 1983
Joseph Campbell,

THE HERO WITH A THOUSAND FACES.

THE MYTHOLOGY OF LOVE.

OCCIDENTAL MYTHOLOGY.

ORIENTAL MYTHOLOGY.

Fritjof Capra. THE TAO OF PHYSICS. Bantam, 1978.

Carlos Castaneda. TALES OF POWER.

Dale Pollock. SKYWALKING: THE LIFE AND FILMS OF GEORGE LUCAS. Crown, 1983.

J. R. R. Tolkien. LORD OF THE RINGS. Ballantine, 1966. (George Allen & Unwin, 1953-56)

Gary Zukav. THE DANCING WU LI MASTERS. Bantam, 1981.



MOMENTS AT THIS YEAR'S MWC

*(above) Jenni & John Hennig,
Jean Cavelos & friend*

*(right) Seth Bonder, Carolyn
Golledge and Angela-Marie
Varesano*

photos by Carolyn Golledge



SAY "BON GIORNO" TO SOME ITALIAN STAR WARS (AND SE) FANS!



(above) Cristiano Cabonelli, Mauro Viglione, Cristina Govoni,
and Simona Degli Esposti

(below) Gian Paolo Gasperi, editor/publisher of the zine ALLIANCE,
and Angela Fassio (watch for Angela's excellent novel "The
Conspiracy of Kommnor" in the upcoming TREMOR IN THE FORCE!)



Ed's Desk

Well, did you despair of ever seeing this issue? I sort of despaired of ever getting it out! Since SE#18 came out, my life has been topsy-turvy and it hasn't really slowed down yet.

As you know, I left my job of eight-and-a-half years on March 15. It was not an easy decision and was one I'd agonized over for months. But I was backed into a corner by unsympathetic and hostile forces and felt that it was the only thing I could do to save my sanity and my health. The stress had caused my medical problems in November and I could feel the migraines starting to come back. It was then that I made my decision.

I freelanced and worked as a temp for about two months, but just couldn't quite make enough to pay the bills. So I went back to work full-time on May 9th. I was very lucky to find a position with a small law firm, ironically in the same building I had been working, and, after a hard settling-in phase, I'm fairly happy here. I had hoped that I would be able to sneak in some time to do my fannish typing, as I had at my previous job, but my in-box was, more often than not, filled to overflowing and I've been kept extraordinarily busy.

So, I'd been typing up this issue on my cranky little PC at home. I'd gotten the main article of Bev Clark's finished and the first half of the LoCs (you'll note a change in typefaces halfway through the zine), when the PC blew its main memory board to kingdom come. This coincided with our central air conditioning unit going out and my memory typewriter also giving up the ghost, so I think they were all related.

But, meantime, here it was, late June, no PC or typer to finish the zine on, half the LoCs trapped on a diskette with no print out of them, and time slipping fast away. I brought the diskettes to work in the hope that I could get the PC I work on here to accept them. Well...I was able to get a print out of sorts, but nothing publishable, so I was forced to retype the rest of the LoCs and the ad section on this machine.

It was impossible to work at home because of the heat. If you've never been to Texas in July, you don't know what you're missing! One day, while the official high was "only" 101°F, our patio thermometer read 108! We were without A/C for nearly three weeks before we were able to get the unit replaced. The only way to survive was to sit very quietly in front of an oscillating fan and do as little as possible.

During all this fun stuff, Katy was sick with a sinus infection plus we had to have minor surgery done on her left eye to open a blocked tear duct. Fortunately, that went well and we hope that the procedure cleared up her problem, but are still in the waiting and watching phase. But she was really miserable in the heat.

And, to top it all off, my first cousin, with whom I had grown up, was shot and killed the night of July 4th. It was an accidental shooting, but still that was the hardest funeral I've ever had to attend. I've felt like I've been through the wringer this week!

But, anyway, here is SE#19, late but in your hands. I'm in the process of looking at new computers and am going to try to get TREMOR IN THE FORCE #4 out this month, as well, so I've decided to put off the deadline for #20 a bit. Normally, the deadline would be August 1, but I'm going to skip the September issue and set the deadline for SE#20 for November 1. That should let us all enjoy the rest of the summer and get our fall schedules under way, plus will give me a much needed breather after a hard spring and summer. And hopefully, by that time, I'll have my new equipment in and working and SE can pick up again, full speed ahead!

CONSUMER COMMENTS

FROM:

Lynette Lichenstein
c/o Jail Division
61 Riesner
Houston, TX 77002

I want to buy or copy the following:

Contraband #1 and #3
Dark Lord (US version only)
Empire Review #4
Equal Space #2
Far Realms #8
Galaxy in Flames (Part 2)
Jedi Journal #3
Luminous Beings #1-3
Lost Jedi #2
Multiverse #8
Return to Star Wars
The Return
Star Journeys
Starwings #2
To Love a Queen
Tanis (the Whills)

I will pay a reasonable price if people are willing to sell. If they are willing to just let me borrow and copy, I will be glad to put up a deposit and I insist on paying postage.

I need to know if these ever saw print: Far Horizons, Light Speed, Echo 7 #2, Spica #3, Organia #2.

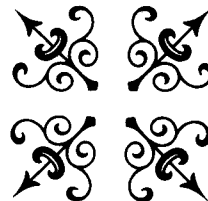
Does anyone know the whereabouts of Bev Lorensen? I paid her \$10 for a deposit on something called "Perfect Fusion" and she promised to keep in touch. I've spent the last 2-3 years trying to find her.

Was there ever a zine called "Conflicting Impulses"? Are "Alternates" and "Errantry" SW zines?

I will be very grateful for any assistance.

ART CREDITS

Judith Low -- Mastheads
Carol Peters -- 37, 42, 50
Danaline Bryant -- 38
Melanie Guttierrez -- 44
Sandi Jones -- 53



A Personal Statement

Equal space will be offered for replies.

((Editor's note: I do not know either of these ladies or have any idea what the quarrel is between them. I will print the rebuttal than the subject will be closed, as I have no intention of allowing a letter war to run in these pages.))

From: Sandra K. Durham, STAR WARS FAN ALLIANCE, 1124 Conservation Road, Martinsville, IN 46151-9015

Fellow Fans:

Recently, I learned that certain allegations are circulating about me in the fan press. While I am usually a pretty mellow sort, I'm not inclined to let lies go by unchallenged. The source of these lies is one Kris Clark of Fresno, CA. She has apparently decided that I'm an evil unparalleled in fannish history and has taken it upon herself to expunge me from said fandom. Fortunately, I don't expunge worth a hoot!

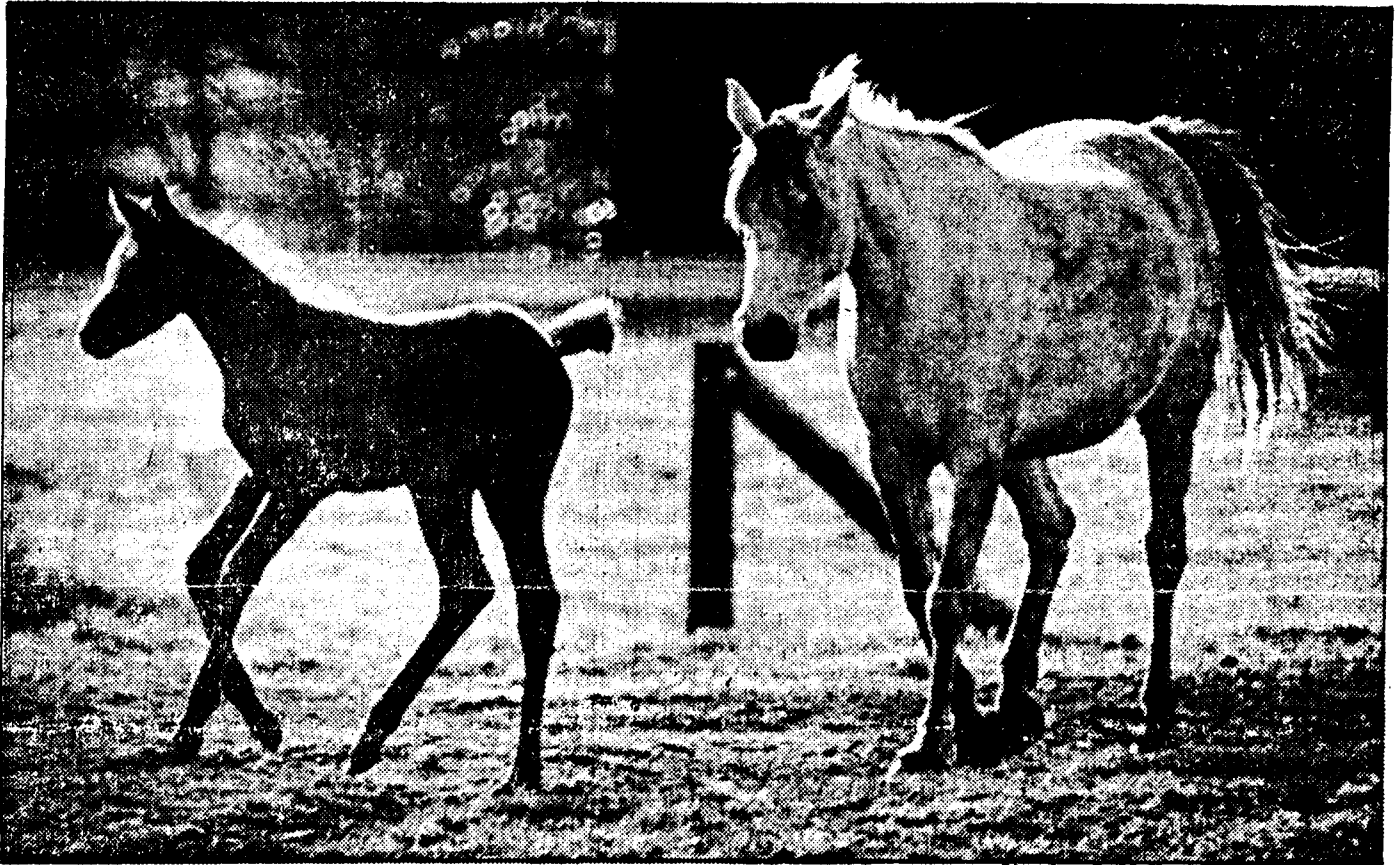
Now, you might reasonably ask, what did she do to provoke such an outpouring of spite, such a flood of corrosive bile?

I returned a check. I asked a question. All with sincere apology, cordiality and the first issue of the subscription the check was intended to pay for. Yes, that's right. I sent her a copy of a zine she hadn't paid for. I thought it was only right since she had intended to pay for it. Since she had also included funds for the "club affiliation package" I'd offered, I asked, politely, for the name of her local club for the records.

What I got back was a check wrapped in a verbal letter bomb. I had never before been subjected to such a childish, petulant diatribe by a presumed adult. Now, I'm part Irish, a Scorpio and was brought up to believe that you don't repay courtesy with vitriol, and I've no patience with childishness in adults. Still, all things considered, my reply was temperate--I only flayed off a few square inches of skin and I omitted the salt rub entirely! A short, brisk exchange of correspondence followed that ended when I decided that the STAR WARS FAN ALLIANCE wasn't so hard up for cash that I needed to put up with this foul-tempered little harridan. I returned her money--in full, by the way and I refrained from telling what bodily orifice to put it in! In her last missive (which is kept, along with the rest of her rantings, in an isolation cube to prevent contamination of the Base!), she informed me that she'd turned me in to Lucasfilm, the Post Office and the Better Business Bureau! Since my only "crimes" were failure to grovel before the mighty (childish, boorish, insufferable, take your pick) Kris Clark and a tendency to fall woefully behind in my correspondence, those worthy folks did not clap me in irons and ship me to the Kessel Spice Mines. Thus foiled in her quest for petty revenge, she has now resorted to outright lies in an effort to destroy my personal reputation and the STAR WARS FAN ALLIANCE. She can offer no proof to back her claims because none exists.

Some editors, for reasons I won't comment on here, have taken her unsupported word and have refrained from offering me a chance to respond. I prefer to offer fandom an opportunity to check out the SWFA for themselves. The next issue of ALLIANCE COMLINK, Vol. 2, No. 1 will be a special "Conspiracy Against Fandom" issue with some serious stuff (we're working on a constitution right now) and some stuff that is decidedly...not serious. The issue is already late (sigh) so it will be out as soon as we can pull it together. Melanie Gutterrieze of New Orleans is putting her considerable talent and imagination to work on the cover. I invite SOUTHERN ENCLAVE's readers to check us out for themselves and make up their own minds. The issue will cost \$2.00 and the first seventy-five orders will also get a free copy of ALLIANCE COMLINK, Vol. 1, No. 1. Make payments payable to me.

This letter has run long for which I apologize, but the situation can't be fully explained in twenty-five words or less. I'd like to thank Cheree for printing it and you for taking time to read it. May the Force be with you.



Charles S. Vallone/Journal Times

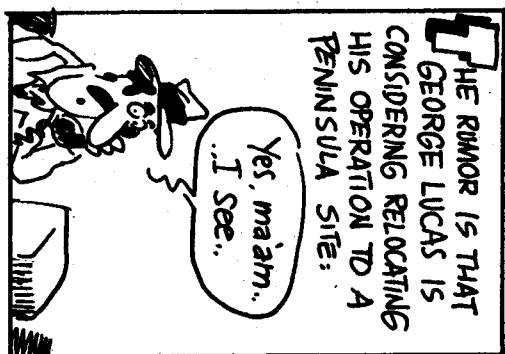
Just horsing around

Gypsy, an Arabian filly owned by Mary Urhausen, romps Thursday with her mother, Rosie, in a field along 3 Mile Road. Spring frolicking may be deterred by today's weather. A 30 percent chance of afternoon

rain and an 80 percent chance of evening showers is forecast, according to the National Weather Service in Milwaukee. A high today in the 40s is expected, but cooler, wet weather is forecast for the weekend.

► An un-Frantic Harrison Ford, with son Malcolm, 1, came through L.A. airport on his way home from New York, where he'd been working on Mike Nichols' movie *Working Girl*.





4-19-88



© Phil (THE BUCK STARTS HERE) Frank



FARLEY / Phil Frank

On Your Marks . . . !

Get outta town, Rambo. Take a hike, Dundee. "Willow's" beating both of you!

A rep for MGM says the George Lucas-produced/Ron Howard-directed fantasy will now open at approximately 1,000 screens on May 20.

It was scheduled for May 25 release, for commercial as well as sentimental reasons—the date kicks off the summer box office and celebrates Lucas' "Star Wars" opening on May 25, 1977. This gives "Willow" a five-day jump on "Rambo III" and "Crocodile II." "So hopefully, 'Willow' can begin building up steam," said the MGM spokesman.

The TV ad blitz kicks off tonight with 15-second spots.

—From Pat H. Broeske

□

The Word on 'Willow'

Whilst awaiting "Willow," how's about reading the novelization?

Or maybe not.

Locus—the trade journal of sci-fi/fantasy literature—says about the book, now in stores, "[It] doesn't stand up on its own." The 276-page Del Rey paperback was written by Wayland Drew, based on the screenplay by Bob Dolman, which in turn was based on a story by starwarrior Lucas.

The story's about little Willow Ufgood, a member of the Nelwyn race (they're on the short side), who teams with an outcast warrior named Madmartigan, a member of the taller Daikini race, to transport an infant girl to her homeland.

Locus reviewer Tom Whitmore dubbed the book "a pleasant quest fantasy," but cautioned that it "lacks something. . . . Perhaps because the visual effects of the movie are supposed to be spectacular the plot is a little thin. Perhaps it's just that the characters are a little too common."

He was, however, won over by Madmartigan the knight (who'll be played by Val Kilmer) and the sorceress Fin Raziel (Patricia Hayes). And the novelization succeeded on another level: "I tell you it definitely makes me want to see the movie."

—From Pat H. Broeske

The Bids on "Willow": A Fantasy World?

MGM is showing mucho confidence in its George Lucas-produced, Ron Howard-directed fantasy "Willow": It rejected initial bids that came in from theater operators and is pressing for a better deal, as in hefty 16-week-minimum playdates and a "substantial guarantee and advance," according to a copy of its rebid letter to exhibitors obtained by Outtakes.

It's highly unusual for a studio to ask for a minimum four-month booking, except for anticipated blockbusters—such as sequels to previous megahits. The last 16-week guarantee was for "Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom," said several exhibitor sources. By comparison, "The Living Daylights" (the last James Bond) and "Top Gun" both opened with eight-week guaranteed playdates.

David Forbes, MGM-UA distribution president, boasted, "It's safe to say the terms we're asking for 'Willow' indicate we think we've got a smash hit. We think it might be the next 'Star Wars.'"

MGM rebid the film April 4 after exhibitor offers were deemed unacceptable (it's not uncommon—MGM also rebid "Rocky III" and "A View to a Kill," according to sources, and got slightly better terms the second time around).

One East Coast film buyer speculated that the proposed rebid—if it isn't negotiated down—could bring MGM close to \$15 million in advances—two weeks before "Willow" opens May 20.

Suggested terms in the MGM rebid letter, confirmed by an MGM exec: "floors" of 70/30 for



Warwick Davis, the lead in "Willow," and a buddy.

the first four weeks (meaning MGM gets 70% of the box-office gross, the theater keeps 30%), then four weeks at 60/40, four weeks at 50/50, four weeks at 40/60 and any and all additional weeks at 35/65.

Said a West Coast buyer, who didn't want to be identified for fear of reprisals: "With all the merchandising deals already set on 'Willow,' the movie *better* be a blockbuster. You don't see any kids walking around with 'Howard the Duck' calendars, do you?"

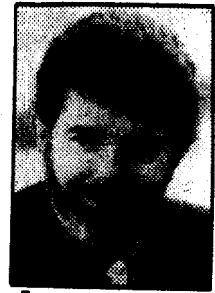
□

MGM started exhibitor screenings last weekend. (There were no unauthorized guests at the Mann's Village showing—with security guards keeping out any lurking media.) But we polled about 30 exhibitors: Response ranged from "no comments," to raves, especially for the special effects, to puzzlement over who the target audience will be. Some said it seemed "too scary for little kids" and "not hip enough for teens." Most exhibitors seemed to agree that certain "Willow" characters seemed derivative of "Star Wars" characters.

—From *Craig Modderno*

MOVIES

Lucasfilms, the film studio of George Lucas of "Star Wars" fame, is threatening to yank its movie-making empire out of Marin County unless it can expand into residentially



Lucas

zoned Lucas Valley. Lucas wants to build a 350,000 square-foot structure about twice the size of Marin's famous Civic Center to house the special effects division, but is being opposed to County Supervisor Robert Roumiguere. "I would hate

to see him leave, but we're not willing to sacrifice the valley to keep him here," Roumiguere said. He said it might be possible to work out a compromise under which the Lucas Valley area would not be involved, but Lucas could acquire other land. The studio, one of the county's largest employers, has produced such blockbusters as "Star Wars" and "Raiders of the Lost Ark."

"At one point, Paul called me and said, 'I'm erasing all your harmonies from the tape, and I'm marrying Carrie Fisher next week.' I thought that was an interesting one-two punch."

Art Garfunkel,
on his last attempt at a
collaboration with his
former partner, Paul Simon

Q: When will the next "Star Wars" movie be released, and what will the storyline be? Also, how many "Star Wars" films can we expect? I think Mr. Lucas and company wait too long between sequels.

A: That's a good question... and one that we don't have an answer for. As you probably know, the three films released to date were intended to comprise the second of three trilogies - indeed, the original "Star Wars" is now labeled "Chapter IV" in the opening crawl - but no firm dates have been set for the production of another movie in the series. As far as producer George Lucas "waiting too long," it's no easy feat to engineer all of the special effects and to keep them original, which accounted for the three-year gaps between the first picture (1977), "The Empire Strikes Back" (1980) and "Return of the Jedi" (1983). Before we see another Luke Skywalker epic from Lucas, we'll be getting a third Indiana Jones adventure - yes, with Harrison Ford back in that role - since that is now in the pre-production stages.

For George Lucas and MGM, a Lot Rides On Fate of Lucas's New Fantasy: 'Willow'

By DANIEL AKST

Staff Reporter of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

It's this year's biggest movie-making throw of the dice: "Star Wars" creator George Lucas will try to bounce back from his "Howard the Duck" fiasco with a high-priced fantasy flick called "Willow."

Everything about this epic spells risk. Production costs alone exceeded \$35 million—almost double the average major-studio film. And the May 20 release date, nearly 11 years to the day after "Star Wars" premiered, is certain to invite comparisons to Mr. Lucas's earlier box-office phenomenon.

Moreover, unlike some new movies, which have a limited opening in New York and Los Angeles first, "Willow" will hit perhaps 1,000 theaters nationwide right off the bat—but only a week before "Rambo III" and "Crocodile Dundee II," two possible blockbusters that will compete for top theaters and moviegoers' money.

Bet for Everyone

"Willow" is also a big bet for the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Pictures unit of MGM/UA Communications Co., which has put up \$20 million of the \$35 million production costs, and which only recently geared up as a full-scale movie studio after it was reconstituted by financier Kirk Kerkorian. MGM/UA will distribute the film. And it's a gamble for MGM's production boss, Alan Ladd Jr., who hit the jackpot with Mr. Lucas and "Star Wars" when Mr. Ladd was at Twentieth Century Fox Film Corp. Mr. Ladd took on "Star Wars" after it had been rejected by two other studios.

"I'd be a fool not to be concerned," acknowledges Greg Morrison, marketing president for Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. But, he says, just wait until "Willow" comes out. "It's going to knock the socks off the country and the world. It's boffo."

If "Willow" fails, it won't be for lack of marketing. MGM/UA's media budget for the film exceeds \$6 million, and Mr. Lucas's company, Lucasfilm Ltd., says advertising and promotion expenditures will total at least \$20 million—which is on top of

the production costs. The campaign will include TV spots on "The Cosby Show" and "60 Minutes." There will also be a "Willow" role-playing game, "Willow" books and "Willow" toys.

Can Mr. Lucas work his cosmic magic again? The question is particularly nerve-racking given that, after two and a half years, "Willow" isn't even done yet—and screenings are scheduled to begin for theater owners later this month.

Still, Director Ron Howard, whose prior credits include "Cocoon" and "Splash," says: "We're actually a little ahead of where we're supposed to be." In fact, Mr. Howard says, things are going so well that

'WILLOW' IS THE
story of Willow
Ufgood, a member of the
Nelwyn dwarf race that
lives in fear of the large,
warlike Daikinis.

the release date was moved up from May 25, the actual "Star Wars" anniversary, to get more summer playing days and to better compete with the two other potential blockbusters.

Filmed in rural England, the Welsh moors, Northern California and in glacial regions of New Zealand, "Willow" is in some ways typical Lucas allegory. It is the story of Willow Ufgood, a member of the Nelwyn dwarf race that lives in fear of the large, warlike Daikinis. Willow becomes guardian to a Daikini baby who is destined to destroy an evil sorceress terrorizing the magic kingdom—unless the sorceress can destroy the child first.

There's some concern that "Willow" will get typecast as a "sword-and-sorcery" picture, the kind that was briefly popular five or six years ago, but never really resulted in a runaway hit.

With so much riding on the picture, MGM/UA is playing hardball with theater owners—as is Paramount, the Gulf & Western Inc. unit that is releasing "Crocodile Dundee II," and the TriStar unit of Columbia Pictures Entertainment Inc., releasing "Rambo III."

Exhibitors reportedly are being asked to guarantee months-long showings if they want any of the three movies, although some theater owners scoff that such guarantees are unenforceable.

Lucas Is No. 1 Reason

Still, there are a number of reasons for exhibitors to want to screen "Willow." No. 1 is Mr. Lucas, the executive producer. His pictures include some of the biggest hits ever. Besides the groundbreaking "Star Wars" trilogy, which reportedly grossed more than \$4 billion world-wide from ticket sales and merchandising spinoffs, Mr. Lucas's credits include "American Graffiti," "Raiders of the Lost Ark" and "Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom."

In a sense, the 43-year-old Mr. Lucas has more riding on "Willow" than anybody. A lavish spender when it comes to making movies, if "Willow" flops he may find himself embarrassed and marked as box-office poison. Mr. Lucas last was executive producer of "Howard the Duck," a colossal flop for MCA Inc. that cost more than \$35 million to make and grossed about \$15 million at the box office.

"'Willow' has been in my mind for about 15 years," Mr. Lucas says in a statement. "In order to make fantasy work, you have to create a kind of immaculate reality that exists for the moment of the movie." (Whatever that means.)

So far, exhibitors are most enthusiastic about "Crocodile Dundee II" and least sanguine about "Rambo III." They see "Willow" as a big question mark.

"'Willow' could be big, with Lucas," says William Spencer, head film buyer for the 330-screen Tom Moyer Theaters in Portland, Ore. But he adds: "Does the public want to see this film? Who knows?"

THE MOVIE CHART

Films going into production:

FINDING MAURICE (A&M). Shooting in Jamaica. Denzel Washington is a police chief on a Caribbean island and Robert ("Hollywood Shuffle") Townsend is Maurice, the childhood friend he must arrest for murder. Executive producers Gil Friesen and Dale Pollock. Producers Sandy Lieberson, Marion Hunt and Ed Elbert. Director Carl Schenkel. Screenwriter Hampton Fancher. Also stars Mimi Rogers, James Fox and M. Emmet Walsh. Distributor MGM/UA.

RYAN'S RAGE (Intervision Media). Shooting in S. California. Actioner with the title referring to detective Jack Ryan's assignment involving a

network of white-slavery enthusiasts. Producer Titus Moody and Hank McQuade. Director Frank West. Screenwriters McQuade and Sheila Thompson. Stars Julius Dawson, Chuck McCasin and Thompson.

SLIPSTREAM (Entertainment Film). Shooting in London and Turkey. Following a natural calamity that destroys a society that once was, Mark Hamill and a band of adventurers escape by riding a violent current of air known as the "Slipstream." Executive producers William Braunstein and Arthur Maeslansky. Producer Gary Kurtz. Director Steven Lisberger. Screenwriters Tony Kayden and Lisberger. Also stars F. Murray Abraham, Bob Peck, Bill Paxton, Kitty Aldridge and Ben Kingsley.

—Compiled by David Peckhie

Doth Lucas Protest Too Much?

Today's Preoccupation With Movie Revenues Is, Well, Gross

By JACK MATHEWS

In reading accounts of George Lucas' press conference Monday at the Cannes Film Festival, I was stopped by one particular comment attributed to the megastar producer. Defending his 1986 extraterrestrial fowl film, "Howard the Duck," Lucas said it was a tragedy that America's movie press has become preoccupied with big budgets and high grosses.

I can understand why people who live in Marin County think the rest of us worry too much about money. I can even accept his parental bias in liking "Howard the Duck" (I believe it was Jack the Ripper's mother who said, "He was always a good boy"). As an alumnus of the dreaded Movie Press, the news in Lucas' statement was that the failure of "Howard the Duck"—and of "Willow," should it suffer the same fate—is partially my fault!

This is too much responsibility for me, George. I haven't been perfect as a film journalist. I've eaten a few donuts on movie sets. I've kept a few of the T-shirts I've been sent. And, yes, when Daryl Haanah was having her breasts made up with gold glitter on the Caribbean set of "Splash," I did not avert my eyes.

But reporting that "Howard the Duck" cost about \$36 million to make and that it earned less than \$10 million in domestic grosses is not something I will carry to the grave.

It is a multiple irony that Lucas would make that comment in that setting. Here's the *Wunderkind* whose "Star Wars" began the obsession—first with the film industry, then with the media—with box-office grosses and inadvertently launched the current recession in quality Hollywood major studio movies.

Lucas deserves credit, if not half of Northern California, for creating phenomena as commercially successful as "Star Wars" and its collateral merchandise. The story may have been as ancient as Homer's last poem, but it was brilliantly executed and by almost any measure a better film than most of the "ahrt" assembled each year for competition in Cannes.

What I wonder is whether Lucas was as offended when the media reported that "Star Wars," which cost less to make than a government truck, had just outgrossed the Industrial Revolution.

Lucas is not the only movie mogul upset by the media's preoccupation with finances. Producers are businessmen and no one who produces a failure enjoys having the net losses itemized in print. It's like having an expensive facelift go south.

The news also causes some careers to go south. Studio bosses in today's profit-or-perish Hollywood operate more like casino pit bosses than guiding creative lights. They're expected to keep the cards and dice and wheels moving and to make sure the house wins. If the house doesn't win big, they turn in their pinkie rings and go back to driving cabs (the local euphemism is "independent production").

The serious movie media is preoccupied with budgets and grosses because that's what the American film business is about. The alternative, considering the dearth of issues grappled with in films, is to cover the stars—to listen to Paul Hogan gently hype "Crocodile Dundee II" by recalling, once again, how he became a star in mid-life by winning some TV talent contest in Australia, on to fathom the mysterious depths of Sylvester Stallone, as Barbara Walters

gamely attempted, on the eve of "Rambo III."

The truth is, everyone associated with movies is obsessed with budgets and grosses. I haven't met a studio executive who couldn't quote the *real* costs and *actual* grosses of every major movie released by his studio in the last year.

(Frank Price, when he was head of Columbia Pictures, once produced a list for me that showed on one side the costs and income of films that he had turned down, and on the other side, the costs and income of those he had greenlighted. You can guess which bottom line was most attractive.)

And despite all the reports about Cannes Film Festival prize winners "Pelle the Conqueror" and "A World Apart," I will bet that the topics that dominated the conversations of many American journalists along the French Riviera this month were how well "Willow" would open and which of the summer's other box-office favorites—"Dundee II" or "Rambo III"—will finally ring up the biggest season total.

These may not be very challenging issues for the media to ponder. But geeze, George, since "Star Wars," what has there been?

'Slipstream' Rolls On Pinewood Lot

London — Principal photography for sci-fi pic "Slipstream," which reunites "Star Wars" producer Gary Kurtz and star Mark Hamill, started at the U.K.'s Pinewood Studios March 14.

The pic, which also lenses on location in the U.K. and Turkey, is the first in a large projected group of British-based and financed films from Entertainment Film Prods., part of the Entertainment Group of companies.

"Slipstream" — believed to have a budget in the \$15,000,000 range — is directed by Steven Lisberger, and also features Bob Peck, Bill Paxton, Kitty Aldridge and Eleanor David, with appearances by F. Murray Abraham and Ben Kingsley. Screenplay is by Charles Pogue.

Also on the crew are cinematographer Frank Tidy and visual effects supervisor Brian Johnson.

The pic was repped at the American Film Market by Michael Green, chairman of the Entertainment Group, and Nigel Green, m.d. of Entertainment Film Prods. "Slipstream" is scheduled for worldwide release early in 1989.

Producer Gary Kurtz makes his directorial debut in Winnmill Productions "Feathers," a Harvey-esque yarn of an illustrator whose bird creation comes to life to provide him with sage advice. Mark Hamill stars for producers Chip Miller and Dennis Winfrey.

—From Leonard Klady

Q. Did Mark Hamill have plastic surgery after *Star Wars*? What is he doing now?

— Louise Johnson, Haughton, La.

A. He did, on his nose and mouth, because of a car accident right before *Star Wars* came out. He made it to the premiere, bandages and all. Hamill is filming *Slipstream*, a science-fiction fantasy, in England and Turkey. It also stars F. Murray Abraham and Ben Kingsley.

far less urgent missions).

So Walker launches his own investigation, which leads him to a dead man, a self-centered but frightened young smuggler named Michele (Emmanuelle Seigner), and two different factions of men who are after the same mysterious item.

"Frantic" was directed by Roman Polanski, and there are touches here of his best work in the 1974 "Chinatown." "Frantic" isn't quite as good, but at least it's a high cut above his last outing, the disastrous costume picture "Pirates."

The feel of the film, however, leans more toward the Hitchcockian. The late Alfred did his best work putting perfectly ordinary people into quite extraordinary situations, and that's what Polanski does here, with mixed results.

At its best, "Frantic" is a good, entertaining thriller with a lot of nicely offbeat touches. Walker's journey takes him from the surface Paris, the city of the Eiffel Tower and the Left Bank, to a subterranean society of cocaine, clubs and violence. He gropes his way, sometimes literally, through dark hallways and even darker intentions, and scrambles over the ragged rooftops far above the unforgiving pavement.

Polanski, a Parisian himself since his flight from the American legal system several years back, has a deft hand with the details: the characters, the absurdities, the ambience. The script, which he co-wrote with Gerard Brach, is full of color and unexpected flashes of humor that highlight the tension rather than

detract from it. The film also bears a tragic echo of reality: in the story of a man whose beloved wife is taken away, Polanski is perhaps coming to terms with his own loss, the death of his wife Sharon Tate in 1969 at the hands of the Charles Manson gang.

Ford gives a strong performance all the way, delineating Walker's evolution from an intelligent but somewhat absent-minded doctor to a desperate, angry pursuer who rejects the bureaucracy to mount his own campaign against the kidnappers. Seigner, granddaughter of honored French performer Louis Seigner — and, incidentally, Polanski's lover — has far less range of emotion to portray; but her motivating force, a stubborn greed that drives her to make demands even in the face of a gun, makes her appealing.

"Frantic" does have its problems. The careful initial character building and scene setting is so slow of pace that interest may lag before the movie picks up steam. And Polanski's direction tends to sag here and there. His leisurely European approach occasionally weakens what could be a tight, taut thriller.

Still, this is a good film, and an entertaining one. It's a relief to see Polanski recovering from the "Pirates" debacle, and Ford gets to turn his back on the larger-than-life characterizations of Han Solo and Indiana Jones to play, successfully, at being ordinary.

□ Linda Billington, Daily News arts editor, writes weekly on movies.

In the acclaimed "Witness," Harrison Ford did the fish-out-of-water routine as a streetwise Philadelphia detective gone to ground in the rural, no-tech society of the Amish. In "Frantic," he does it again — but this time, he's no hard-fisted, tough-talking cop. He's a perfectly everyday man, at large and desperate in a strange world that seems designed to thwart him at every turn.

Dr. Richard Walker (Ford) is a San Francisco surgeon who's come to Paris with his wife, Sondra (Betty Buckley), to attend a convention — and to enjoy the romance of the City of Lights in a sort of second honeymoon. But shortly after their arrival, as Walker showers in the bathroom, Sondra leaves the room — and vanishes.

When Walker sets out to find her, he runs into a series of stumbling blocks: the language (he can't speak French), the local police (who wonder if Sondra perhaps has eloped with a lover), and even the American Embassy (where he is forced to wait in line behind dozens of people with

Lucas Hits Critics; Applause Greet 'Willow' at Cannes

By MICHAEL CIEPLY,
Times Staff Writer

CANNES, France—George Lucas came to make the case for "Willow," and met a sea of blank stares.

Just minutes into a much-anticipated morning news conference, there were suddenly no questions. The world's film journalists had the great recluse on a hot seat and didn't know what to ask him.

But that night at the film's premiere following the Palme d'Or awards ceremony, "Willow's" black-tie premiere audience received the film with a warm two-minute round of applause, and director Ron Howard was greeted enthusiastically by the locals when he appeared on the steps outside the Palais des Festivals.

At the morning press conference, the festival moderator taunted the blear-eyed crowd of about 200—only a fraction of the turnout for Robert Redford last week. "Good, you are lively," the moderator said.

"Do you always get up so early [8:30] in the morning?" a French reporter finally queried.

The answer was "yes." If he were still in Spain—where he had just left the set of his latest Indiana Jones adventure—he'd "already be wondering where the first shot was," said Lucas.

It wasn't much, but it was a start. And once things warmed up a bit, the crowd peppered Lucas—on a dais with director Howard, writer Bob Dolman and actors Val Kilmer, Joanne Whalley, Warwick Davis and Jean Marsh—with tough questions about his \$35-million epic, which was released by MGM last week to big crowds but some harsh reviews.

Why did "Willow" seem to draw so much from other films—"The Wizard of Oz," "Peter Pan," "Star Wars" and so

"I'm like a land mine on the talk show circuit — four shows in one. You get celebrity child, rock star ex-wife, former drug addict and movie star!"

— Carrie Fisher



Warwick Davis, foreground, hero of "Willow," with actress Joanne Whalley, the film's creator George Lucas and its director Ron Howard, from left, assemble for festivities in Cannes.

on?

"It's very hard to avoid, especially in art. Art is by its nature derivative," explained Lucas.

Wasn't the movie too violent for young children?

"The violence is very carefully worked out, so there's no on-screen gore. . . . I'm very careful not to use revenge or sadistic violence, but rather as a way of expressing your survival. Children have to learn it's a violent world we live in. . . . Ron's daughter loved it; my daughter was a little frightened." (Both girls are 7 years old, said their fathers.)

Was the music too loud and the pacing too fast?

"It's a style I've developed in film. . . . A 3-year-old who can't follow any of the dialogue can still follow the movie."

Why doesn't "Willow's" central myth—about a princess-baby's rescue by a heroic dwarf—relate to what we're living today?

"It does, as much as any other myth does. . . . Good versus evil and how you conduct yourself in a society are very relevant."

Whether Lucas would appear

LUCAS

Continued from Page 6

personally to introduce "Willow" had been in doubt through much of last week. Several sources involved with the film said the producer had been reluctant to appear, but was pressed to come by studio executives and other advisers.

"Willow" is the convoluted tale of an imaginary tribe of dwarves that is landed with a baby from the normal-sized Daikini tribe. Prophesized to destroy the Daikinis' Queen Bavmorda (Jean Marsh), the child's safety is entrusted to dwarf Willow Ufgood.

Shot in Wales, Northern England and New Zealand, the film incorporates the customary Lucas special effects including animal-human transformations, villains going up in flames and fantastic castles.

"Willow's" reception at the evening gala didn't exactly match the tumultuous standing ovation given "E.T.: The Extraterrestrial" when it premiered here in May, 1982, to a tumultuous standing ovation—they were surely disappointed. But MGM chief Alan Ladd Jr. said he was "thrilled" with the response. "I was at a screening once here where they threw things," Ladd said of the finicky festivalgoers.

Howard added at the dinner honoring festival winners—"Willow" was shown out of competi-

tion—that "I've had applause, but I've never had 'bravos' before," looking obviously delighted that the audience had responded positively to the film. (Lucas had left for his Marin County ranch by then.)

At any rate, the festival, in its last day, offered a fine platform for answering "Willow's" detractors.

Lucas insisted that the movie's masked villain, Kael, *wasn't* named for critic Pauline Kael. But he took a few good licks at the reviewers anyway.

"Reviews in the U.S. are very short, very glib," Lucas explained to the Continental press. "They tell you a little about what a movie is about, and come up with some spiffy little remark. I really don't give them much concern."

The producer said he remained "very happy" with "Howard the Duck," and called it a "tragedy" that America's movie press—apparently the central villain in his personal myth—had become preoccupied with big budgets and high grosses.

Veteran British actress Jean Marsh—"Willow's" evil Queen Bavmorda—bravely chirped up that the cast wouldn't mind if Lucas cooled the licensing a bit. "We would all pay not to be on T-shirts and things," said Marsh.

And, yes, Virginia, there will be another "Star Wars." But not for a while. "There are other films I want to make first," Lucas replied.

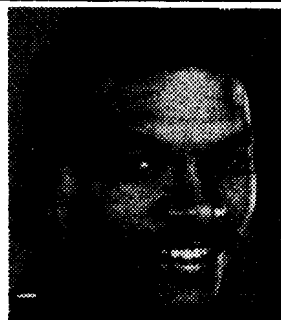


JUDIE BURSTEIN

▲ After Amy Irving wiped out the audience in Athol Fugard's moving off-Broadway play *The Road to Mecca*, tough guy Harrison Ford choked up during a backstage visit.

HOROSCOPE

Wednesday, April 6, 1988
By Joyce Jillson



Today's birthday: Actor Billy Dee Williams is 51 today. Strength and determination bring you the success you so earnestly desire (and deserve). Business and pleasure mix well this month. Love affairs heat up. Job demands take up more

of your time in May, but the rewards are worth it. Expand communications in June; write, make personal appearances and phone calls. Relationships are very rewarding in July; a marriage proposals may be in the works. Rest up in August. Push fearlessly toward all your goals for September.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Now that Mars (your planetary ruler) is in Aquarius you may feel like rebelling against the rules. Friends are more competitive with you, or vice versa.

THEIR POST-DIVORCE DATING GAME



Paul Simon & Carrie Fisher

Divorce didn't keep Paul and Carrie from a night on the town. Hey, nothing's forever—not even Carrie's blond hair. She dyed it for *Lover Boy*, went back to brown to film *The 'Burbs*. Says she: "I ought to be bald by the end of the summer."

Digging for the Roots of 'Willow's' Mixed Reviews

By CHARLES CHAMPLIN,
Times Arts Editor

Fear, loathing, suspicion and mistrust cling to critics like burrs.

As often as not, these rank emotions arise in simple disagreement. "You liked; I disliked. Therefore you are a blithering idiot." Or, "I hated; you admired. Therefore you are a fool of uncertain and dubious ancestry."

Critics are made to be disagreed with, so this is no grave matter. It is always reassuring to keep in mind that what the critic is offering is only informed opinion, even if it is frequently disguised as God's absolute truth.

The real fun begins when the reviews of several critics on one piece of work can be examined, and the wild divergences noted in the findings of men and women of roughly equal intelligence. It is not always clear that they have been responding to the same item, so sharp and hostile are the differences.

The present case in point is George Lucas' "Willow" (to be followed shortly by the reactions to Sylvester Stallone's "Rambo III"). The reactions to "Willow," summarized in last Sunday's Calendar, have ranged from a 9½ on Gary Franklin's scale of approval to the kind of notices you might give bubonic plague.

The split is so wide and the negative notices so actively hostile that you have to ask why, and to wonder whether the nay-sayers are fairly reporting the film to the

family audience at which it is aimed. An informal exit poll last weekend, reported in Monday's paper, indicated that the parents and children attending had had a fine time.

It's hard not to suspect that, whatever the merits or demerits of "Willow," the great tradition that success cannot be allowed to go unpunished has been upheld. The tradition is not unique to Hollywood or film critics, but it exists and it weighs most strongly against the achievers to whom an appealing humility does not come easily, or at all (Kubrick, Brando, Hoffman, Beatty, Stallone, Fonda, Redgrave . . . to start a hurried list). It's as well Greta Garbo quit when she did; the next time out she might have been found to be overrated.

My truth about "Willow" (which is not his or hers or theirs or the Almighty's) is that it is longer than it ought to be and that it is worryingly slow at the start. Not all of its inventions are successful, and the existence of two clownish miniature Frenchmen, while technologically dazzling, is simply not very interesting. They are a ploy that doesn't come off.

"Willow" isn't "Star Wars" or, to quote another film maker's work, "it." It may well be a long time before we see the equivalent of either again. But "Willow" is good-hearted and sweet-natured, conceptually about as far from the biting cynicism of many present

films as it's possible to get. And the parent-child audiences to whom the film is addressed are likely to appreciate the point of view.

If the two tiny men don't work, there are some magical transformations (a wand-waving and an incantation that keeps going a bit wrong) that are extraordinary special effects. After its slow start, the film picks up momentum like a train and reaches a very satisfying finish.

It remains to be seen whether audiences are turned off by little people in principal roles, as has been predicted. Warwick Davis as Willow is an attractive and sympathetic character, and "Willow" could be the exception that confounds the rule.

The principal philosophical objection to "Willow" has been that the mythic elements Lucas is fond of—good versus evil, monsters and wicked queens, rascals who see the light—have been done to death. "Not 'Once upon a time' again!" has been a recurring cry.

But this confuses the material and the handling. The myths have served us well for thousands of years; only the weapons have changed, from rocks to spears to six-guns to lasers (and potentially back to rocks again if all goes sour).

"Willow," in fact, has the appeal of the fairy tale and the storybook adventure. It may well be that the mythic elements have been more perfectly employed elsewhere, and by Lucas himself, but I doubt that the sense of wonder and the delights of magic have left us, no matter what anybody says.

—A ceremony went awry in New York last week. Helen Hayes put her signature and size 5½ footprint into a 30-pound block of concrete outside the Broadway theater that bears her name. She was assisted by Mark Hamill and Robert Joy, who are starring in "The Nerd" at the Helen Hayes Theater. She flung her shoes into the crowd and signed them before going in to catch the matinee. But by the time theater workers came back out to move the cement block, it was gone. "What Hercules was loose in the theater district?" Hayes said. "I'll tell you one thing, I'm not going there to do it again." One of two cement blocks used in a rehearsal will be placed in the sidewalk.

—LARRY PRYOR

Industrial Light and Magic—

George Lucas' special effects factory and the busiest in the business—is moving next door to Lucas' Skywalker Ranch in rural Marin County, Lucasfilm president Doug Norby announced Wednesday. ILM now operates out of several small buildings in San Rafael. "We need to consolidate under a single roof," said Norby. "It's a creative need. We need to be closer together." The new three-story, 300,000-square-foot structure will house sound stages, studios, offices, shops, production areas, storage and an underground garage for up to 350 employees.

loveever:
★ TO ACTOR MARK HAMILL, it's good to know you're sticking to your principals. Love Sandy
PLEASE BUY MY CAR!
LOOK UNDER '80 JAG XJS
Love & Happiness
Is . . . 1230

Reviews mixed on Lucas' \$55 million epic

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The world's most successful filmmaker and a legendary film company released a \$55 million cinematic gamble today with the opening of the medieval fantasy "Willow" amid less than fantastic reviews.

Sharing the bill at 1,000 theaters nationwide are George Lucas, whose "Star Wars" and "Indiana Jones" films have grossed \$1 billion, and MGM, once Hollywood's greatest studio.

Both parties need a hit. Lucas-film has produced two expensive

flops, "Labyrinth" and "Howard the Duck." MGM is struggling to regain momentum after several reorganizations.

As a further complication, financier Kirk Kerkorian, who owns 82.4 per cent of the parent MGM/UA Communications, is seeking a buyer for the company. A "Willow" hit would enhance the price.

Early reviews have been mixed. Daily Variety termed the film "a medieval mishmash" but predicted "kids will probably love it," and MGM should recover its investment. The Hollywood Reporter praised the production values but complained that the storyline "never really kicks into overdrive."

"For now, (Lucas) wonder wand is broken," reported Time Magazine, and Newsweek headlined its review with "The Raider of Lost Art." Meanwhile, People

Magazine called "Willow" an "over-produced jumble" and "a shrewd and shameless steal from the Bible, Walt Disney, his own 'Star Wars' and 'The Wizard of Oz.'"

Facing the blockbuster compe-

tition of "Rambo III" and "Crocodile Dundee II" on May 25, MGM prudently released "Willow" five days earlier.

"Willow" centers on the efforts of a brave dwarf to save a baby from the clutches of a sorceress queen who fears the child will destroy her power. The hero Willow finds allies in an over-the-hill knight and a pair of mischievous brownies.

There are no major stars in the film, which features Val Kilmer ("Top Gun"), Joanne Whalley, Jean Marsh and 19-year-old Warwick Davis as Willow.

Depending on "Willow's" box office success is a massive merchandising campaign. More than

30 companies have been licensed to manufacture such items as "Willow" underwear, bed sheets, lunch boxes, meal promotion at Wendy's, coloring sets, toy action figures, computer and board games, magic tricks, records, tapes and compact disks.

"Willow" resulted from a long-time friendship between George Lucas and actor-turned-director Ron Howard. They met 15 years ago when Lucas directed "American Graffiti," with Howard as one of the principal actors.

Lucas was just out of USC Film School, directing his first major film under the sponsorship of his friend, Francis Coppola. Howard had been an actor from the age of five, working mostly in television

series such as "The Courtship of Eddie's Father" and "The Andy Griffith Show."

A couple of years ago, the two young men had another meeting. Now Lucas had become one of the two (with Steven Spielberg) most successful filmmakers in history because of his "Star Wars" and "Indiana Jones" films. And Howard was a topflight director of such films as "Splash" and "Cocoon."

Howard recalled their conversation in a recent interview:

Lucas: "I'd like to do a fantasy."

Howard: "That's something I'd like to do."

Lucas: "I've always wanted to

do a story that centered on a little person."

Howard: "It sounds like I'm trying to get a job here. That's something I've always wanted to do, too. I've always been intrigued by the idea of taking a little person or the relationship of two little people and developing it so that 15 or 20 minutes into the picture you'd forget completely that the person was small."

"Willow" was the result, with Lucas creating the story, Bob Dolman writing the script and Howard directing.

Among the director's many chores was preserving believability in the unworldly happenings: "Fantasy works best when everyone involved in a project —

writer, producer, director and certainly the actors — believe what they're doing and try to be as honest as possible," Howard said. "Unless you're doing a satire. And early on, George and I decided we didn't want this to be a satire."

"The actors really had to trust that it was okay to look at a talking animal and play a scene just as if that creature was an important character in your life. Gee, they all really committed to it. That's the only way you can make a movie like this one."

Shooting locations for "Willow" ranged from the glacial mountains of New Zealand to the craggy cliffs of Wales, with interiors in London.

'Willow' is getting a bum rap as a flop

Is Lucas' 'Willow' really a turkey?

By Ben Yagoda
Knight-Ridder Newspapers

Why were people so quick to label *Willow* a flop?

It may be because of George Lucas' envy — the film was conceived and produced by Lucas, whose take from the *Star Wars* trilogy ensures that he'll

FILM

be rich a long, long time from now. Or it may just have been because of the headline possibilities: "*Willow* the Wisp," "*Willow* Weeps," etc., etc.

But the box-office returns from the movie's first four weekends are in, and *Willow* — a story of queens and witches, little people and warriors, is not a flop.

Although it slipped from first in gross to third, then fifth and now stands at eighth, it has taken in \$30.6 million — nearly recouping its \$35 million price tag, although by one estimate it must earn \$90 million to make a profit.

Exit polls taken by organizations unconnected with the film show that people who see *Willow* are satisfied with it; the film shows signs of stabilizing as a steady summer audience-draw.

Word of mouth may yet outweigh critics, like one who called *Willow* a reprise of *Star Wars* except for "a baby obsession suggesting an unholy alliance of *Lord of the Rings* and *thirtysomething*." Others said it is a movie stuffed with borrowings from the Old Tes-



Warwick Davis stars in George Lucas' current summer film *Willow*.

tament, *Gulliver's Travels*, *Peter Pan*, *Mad Max*, *The Lord of the Rings*, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, *The Odyssey*, *The Wizard of Oz* and, most of all, *Star Wars*.

"I'm derivative, but I read where *Rambo III* is 're-working the genre,'" Lucas said wryly in an interview the other day. "When someone says you're 'The Great Regurgitator,' it's painful."

Lucas didn't say so, but it's especially off the mark to consider *Willow* a box-office bomb when you take a look at some of the turkeys that really deserve the designation.

Not long ago, the entertainment weekly *Variety* published a list of every big-budget film made in the last 30 years showing the price tag, the proceeds and hence the profit or loss.

The data need some explanation. The budget given is only the cost of completing the final cut of the film; it excludes money spent for additional prints, promotion and advertising. And the income is only from domestic box-office rentals; it excludes foreign box office, television and home video rights and licensing fees (an especially important

source of revenue for *Willow*, with its \$1.99 devil dogs, \$3.99 warriors on horseback, and its sticker books, jigsaw puzzles and lunch boxes.)

Still, these figures are probably the best available gauge of how well a film has done. Here's what they say are the biggest money-losers of all time, starting with the 10th-worst bomb:

10: A tie, with a net loss of \$25 million each: *Return to Oz*, the immediately forgotten 1985 sequel to the 1939 classic, and *Dune*, an ill-fated meeting of the minds among David Lynch, Dino De Laurentiis and Frank Herbert.

9. (\$27 million). *Superman IV*, the latest and — if there's a God — last attempt to squeeze water from Kryptonite.

8. (\$27.4 million). *Enemy Mine*, the odd science-fiction picture that starred Louis Gossett Jr. as a space lizard.

7. (\$27.5 million). *Once Upon a Time in America*, spaghetti Western auteur Sergio Leone's gangster epic. (This film, like some others on the list, recouped some of its losses in the foreign market.)

6. (\$29.2 million). *Raise the Titanic*. This 1980 turkey sank faster than the ship.

5. (\$30 million). *Pirates*. It was Roman Polanski's idea to cast Walter Matthau as a swashbuckling buccaneer. Bad move.

4. (\$35 million). Who could forget *Heaven's Gate*, Michael Cimino's unintelligible Western? Probably the most critically dumped-on movie of all time.

3. (\$37.6 million). *Ishtar*, the most recent member of the list, shows what happens when you take a small comedy and make it a star-crossed extravaganza.

2. (\$38.1 million). *The Cotton Club*, Francis Coppola's foray into the history of Harlem and jazz brought in almost \$13 million at the box office. But it cost \$51 million to make — more than the annual budget of many medium-size countries.

1. And the biggest flop of all time is... *Inchon*. Ring a bell? This 1982 war film, featuring Laurence Olivier as Douglas MacArthur in a spectacular piece of miscasting, cost \$46 million to make and raked in \$1.9 million at the box office. The film was financed by the Rev. Sun Myung Moon; you have to sell a lot of roses to make up \$44.1 million.

Net loss isn't the only way to judge "flopitude." Maybe a purer measure is what might be called the Embarrassment Factor, or EF: the percentage of a movie's cost that it earns back at the box office. By this gauge, the 10th-biggest flop of all time is *Lookin' to Get Out*, a woeful Las Vegas comedy starring Jon Voight and Ann-Margret, which earned a million dollars on a budget of \$17 million, for an EF of 5.8 percent.

It's followed by the 1969 *Waterloo*, a De Laurentiis fiasco featuring Rod Steiger as Napoleon (5.6 percent); and a tie between the alarm-

ingly bad Michael Keaton vehicle *The Squeeze* and Luciano Pavarotti's dismal movie debut *Yes, Giorgio*, (both 5.5 percent).

Tied for fourth are *Honky Tonk Freeway*, a John Schlesinger road picture that went nowhere; *Heaven's Gate*; and *Inchon*. In third place is *One from the Heart*, Francis Coppola's woeful Las Vegas comedy (3.8 percent); *Pirates* (3.2 percent)

is second.

The most embarrassingly unsuccessful movie of all time? It's *Eight Million Ways to Die*; which cost \$18 million and brought in only \$500,000 for an EF of 2.7 percent. I'm afraid I can't tell you what it's about. I didn't see it, either.

Material from the New York Times News Service is included in this report.



DEBBIE REYNOLDS & CARRIE FISHER

DEBBIE REYNOLDS AND CARRIE FISHER

Debbie Reynolds is *both* star and star mom, since her daughter, Carrie Fisher, is now a star in her own right. Both women are strong, feisty—and survivors. To understand how they got that way you have only to meet Debbie's own mother, Maxene Reynolds.

Maxene, with her outspoken, no-nonsense views of life, was always the backbone of her family. The Reynoldses were very poor, yet Maxene managed to eke out a living on her husband, Ray's, small earnings as a carpenter on the railroads.

When Debbie went into show business, Maxene toured with her daughter and is proud of Debbie's honesty and professionalism, but complains she is too trusting. Of show business she says bluntly: I couldn't give you two cents for any of the industry. They do make big money, but there's no privacy. You

couldn't pay me to put up with the trash they put up with!"

Not that Debbie Reynolds is a push-over. She is a trooper and has inherited Maxene's formidable strength. She needed it to survive the breakup of her marriage to Eddie Fisher, which took place amidst a blaze of publicity when Carrie was just a year and a half.

Carrie's legacy from her is, Debbie says, first her life, second her humor ("Carrie is extraordinarily glib"), third her ear. "Naturally she and Todd have a father, although not a good one. He had no influence on the children, but they were born with his vocal prowess."

It is Debbie's view that Carrie grew up so overprivileged in the material sense that she ended up not privileged at all, but underprivileged instead. She is sure that being the daughter of "America's Sweetheart" gave Carrie an identity problem when she was growing up and is only thankful that with the success of the *Star Wars* films, the focus has shifted to Carrie.

Debbie's unsurpassed maternal moment came at a party when Carrie, 14 at the time, introduced her mother to her contemporaries in this way, "I'd like you to meet my parents."

"That was parents with an 's,'" Debbie reiterates, "and that was the ultimate compliment. I had to leave the party because I started to cry. Parents with an 's.' I thought that was quite adroitly stated." ★

Cinefile

River Phoenix joins the cast of Steven Spielberg's "Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade" currently filming in Europe for Lucasfilm. . . .

Producer Gary Kurtz makes his directorial debut in Winmill Productions "Feathers," a Harvey-esque yarn of an illustrator whose bird creation comes to life to provide him with sage advice. Mark Hamill stars for producers Chip Miller and Dennis Winfrey.



Crowds line up at Mann's Chinese Theater to see "Willow."

'Willow' No 'Star Wars' but No 'Duck,' Either

By NINA J. EASTON,
Times Staff Writer

Executive producer George Lucas was in Spain readying Indiana Jones' latest escapades when his big-buck, high-tech, fantasy epic "Willow" opened Friday.

Director Ron Howard spent the evening viewing his creation—along with hundreds of surprised moviegoers at Loew's Tower Theater on New York's Upper East Side.

And MGM/UA Chief Executive Officer Lee Rich sat in his ninth-floor Beverly Hills office counting dollars. "It's like waiting for election results," he said.

Rich wouldn't admit to any anxiety, even as the first reports from

the East Coast trickled in on Friday. By early Saturday, he was claiming victory.

"Ah, it's fantastic," Rich said in a telephone interview from his home. "I'm just delighted."

Despite a lukewarm—and in some cases openly hostile—critical reception, the first screenings of Lucas' \$35-million "Willow" attracted respectable crowds nationwide and around-the-block lines at some Los Angeles theaters. Moviegoers at more than 1,000 theaters across the country paid about \$2.5 million to see the film Friday and \$3.4 million on Saturday, according to sources. Total weekend receipts were expected to reach between \$8 million and \$9 million.

"Those numbers are good," said
Please see 'WILLOW,' Page 6

Continued from Page 1

one industry observer. "It's not a blockbuster, but it's not a 'Howard the Duck' either." Lucas' \$35-million "Howard the Duck" was a box-office disaster.

"Willow" is the opening shot in a fierce competition for the summer movie-going dollar, and both MGM/UA and "Star Wars" creator Lucas have a lot riding on it. After his earlier involvement with two expensive flops—"Labyrinth" as well as "Howard the Duck"—Lucas could use a hit. MGM/UA put up about \$20 million of the film's \$35 million in production costs. That price was steep by industry standards. Special effects like translucent fairies, two-headed dragons and 9-inch human creatures don't come cheap.

Rich said the company already has locked up \$15 million in various advances and guarantees. But the company is pouring many more millions—at least \$6.6 million in the first 10 days alone—into marketing the film, according to company officials.

If Lucas was expecting a replay of the response to his acclaimed "Star Wars" series, when teen-age fans lined up with their sleeping bags days in advance of the sequels, he would have been disappointed with this weekend's opening.

About 50 parents and their children were already in line two hours before the 11 a.m. show at Hollywood's Mann's Chinese Theater on Friday. There were still about 200 tickets left for the 1,400-seat theater's first Friday-night show. The 8:30 p.m. show at Loew's Tower East theater in New York on Friday night was just about sold out when Ron Howard arrived. But the 6 p.m. show was less than half full.

"The attendance is very poor, to tell you the truth," complained theater manager Charles Imam. "Maybe the critics are affecting the turnout, and word of mouth will improve things."

Negative reviews clearly took their toll on the early shows. In New York, where the Post called the film "standard stuff" and the New York Times described the movie's "understandable weariness," a man in a cab pulled up to the curb and motioned a theater manager over to the car, wanting to know if the movie was as bad as the reviews suggested. Finally bucked up by the manager's assurances, he popped right into line.

But a spot check of Los Angeles-area theaters found that audience reaction to the film was

'WILLOW': Lucas-Howard Film Opens Well in L.A.-N.Y.

ASSOCIATED PRESS



"Willow" director Ron Howard signs autographs outside a theater in New York City.

overwhelmingly positive. At Westwood's Mann's Village Theater on Friday night, a sold-out crowd booed the evil Queen Bavmorda, laughed at the bantering of the 9-inch "Brownies" and applauded the dwarf Willow's final success at sorcery.

When it was all over, 7-year-old Josephine Shabtai, her brown eyes wide and glowing, looked as if she had fallen under the Lucas spell. "Fantastic," was all the little girl could utter as her mother guided her past the popcorn stand and out of the theater.

MGM/UA is marketing "Willow" as a family film, and it was clearly a big hit among the PG crowd. "I liked the fantasy and all the unreal stuff," said Brendan Klinger, 13, who saw "Willow" in Sherman Oaks on Friday night.

Added his friend, Blue Lieberman, 12: "It was like a game of dungeons and dragons. My friends would definitely like it. Even my girlfriend."

In Lakewood, 10-year-old Kelly Harrison called it the "cutest movie I've seen in a long time." Twelve-year-old Anne Marie Mays was so impressed with the special effects that she'll urge her friends to see it. And 9-year-old Kary Watson decided that the film was "really cool. I liked it because it was frightening."

With so few family films coming to theaters this summer, the film's popularity among children is a bonus for its makers. But because children typically buy less-expensive tickets, it also means that MGM/UA will have to collect many more ticket receipts to cover the film's steep production and marketing costs.

Moreover, some theater owners worry that both adults and those blockbuster-producing teen-agers will be turned off by a fantasy story about a dwarf's struggle against an evil queen.

Glen Dunks, 30, was growing reluctant to buy a ticket as he watched children pour into a Saturday matinee in New York. "I didn't think it was a children's movie. But seeing all the children go in, I don't know..." he trailed off. Finally deciding that he liked George Lucas enough to chance it, Dunks said he'd try to sit in the balcony smoking section, far away from any restless kids.

In Hollywood, Dennis Adler, the father of an 8-year-old, liked the film but added that "It's geared more to kids. The special effects are designed to enthrall a young mind."

That kind of reaction is disconcerting to some theater owners. "The film is being accepted with families—grandmas, grandpas and children," said Angelo Porchetta,

vice president of Capitol Service Inc., which owns 25 screens in Milwaukee and Madison, Wis. "But so far it doesn't seem to have much of a teen, dating interest. Regrettably, I think it is going to lack enough interest among older kids to be a big success."

But many teens did like it. In Los Angeles, Lucas fan Scott Austin, 17, bought the book "Willow" several months ago and then persuaded

a group of his friends to join him at the film's opening Friday night in Westwood. Both he and his friends loved the film. "It was way better than 'Star Wars,'" said Valerie Kurete, 17. "This seemed more realistic."

Likewise, Tom Rose, 16, said he didn't think reviewers gave the film a fair shake by saying it concentrated too much on special effects and not enough on the characters.

And "Willow" has something else going for it among the teen crowd—the scruffy but heroic Val Kilmer as Madmartigan, who gave what The Times' Sheila Benson called a "fine, lusty performance." Sixteen-year-old Sara Prator of Lakewood put it another way: "Val Kilmer was gorgeous."

The real question now is whether "Willow" can maintain any of the

CONT. NEXT PAGE

momentum that it built by opening five days before two potential blockbusters: "Rambo III" and "Crocodile Dundee II."

"That's when we'll see if 'Willow' has legs," said one industry source.

Contributing to this story were Dennis McDougal and Sue Martin in Los Angeles and Bill Diamond in New York.

Crystal gazing: Billy Crystal plays half of the title roles in Castle Rock's "Boy Meets Girl," to film in August. Director Rob Reiner describes the story as "what men and women go through to fall in love." Nora Ephron wrote the script (formerly titled "Isn't It Romantic") and we can hardly wait to see who plays "girl." . . . Bruce Dern is an ex-Marine who takes a decidedly military approach to ridding his neighborhood of an unbelievably boorish new resident in Universal's dark comedy "The 'burbs." Dern joins equally harried neighbors Tom Hanks and Carrie Fisher. Starts next month.

"At that point my peers were all gay male dancers. I wanted to be accepted. I wanted to be a gay male dancer."

Carrie Fisher,
recalling the period of her
adolescence that she spent in
Las Vegas

George Lucas' "Willow," opening May 20, may be wending its way onto the list. Business Week puts its budget at \$40 million; Wall Street Journal says it's \$35 million.

□



Ufgood the dwarf: our hero (Davis), his patient wife (Peters) and their children

The Empire Strikes Out

WILLOW Directed by Ron Howard; Screenplay by Bob Dolman

"It was a time of dread," reads a legend at the start of George Lucas' new epic. Surely it was. We speak not only of the dour Middle Ages in which this sword-and-sorcery film is set but of the late 1980s, when Lucasfilm hit its dark age, after nearly a decade as the most profitable dream-mongering empire in movie history. By 1984 Lucas had produced five of the eight all-time top grossers. But that was a long time ago, in a land far, far away. Lucas' fantasies went murky (*Labyrinth*) or smirky (*Howard the Duck*), and his empire suddenly looked as frail as King Lear's. So Hollywood is closely watching Lucas' \$35 million gamble on *Willow*. But will moviegoers watch? To a genre weakened by formula and familiarity, Lucas has brought little new, just a reprise of his *Star Wars* plot and characters in sylvan gear. His Luke Skywalker is Willow Ufgood (Warwick Davis), a dwarf in a community of dwarfs, a young farmer put in charge of the infant who is destined to deliver his land from the terrible rule of Queen Bavmorda (Jean Marsh). On his journey to Castle Nockmaar, he acquires a few worthy friends and foes: an outlaw warrior in the Han Solo mold (Val Kilmer), a dashing knight with Lando Calrissian's righteous swagger (Gavan O'Herlihy), a willful princess with martial guile (Joanne Whalley), a Yoda-like wizard (Billy Barty), an ancient sorceress—Obi-Wan Kenobi's kid sister, perhaps—struggling under a curse (Patricia Hayes) and a couple of impish brownies reminiscent of Artoo Detoo and See Threepio.

These characters were not new with Lucas, of course; they spanned epic literature from Ulysses and King Arthur to the *Lord of the Rings* and *Gormenghast* tri-

gies. But *Star Wars* gave a high-tech polish to the rustic hardware, a kick to the old eldritch machinery. Alas, a decade later, everything new in Lucas' films seems old again. There is a shroud of inevitability, of why-bother, about *Willow's* chase through the forest (done better in *Return of the Jedi*), the impromptu ride down a mountain on a warrior's shield (done better in *The Living Daylights*), on the whole tussle of light and dark. The only twist here is that the crucial tug of wills is between two women, the good witch and the bad, over a female messiah. One matriarch fights another in an apocalyptic biddy war.

Any Lucas film will have vagrant charms. Davis is ingratiating. So is Julie Peters playing his wife, as patient as Penelope. Director Ron Howard (*Splash*, *Cocoon*) gets the social politics of the dwarfs' village right, but he is not adept at action scenes: some are too busy; others are botched. Kilmer tries hard in a role that might have fit Mel Gibson like an iron glove, and Whalley, teen angel of the serious British mini-series (*The Edge of Darkness*, *The Singing Detective*) is wasted as the heroine. Both Kilmer and Whalley, in fact, are curiously irrelevant to the climactic battle. But then, *Willow* is a *Star Wars* without star quality, an *Indiana Jones* adventure with the heart ripped out.

"Magic is the bloodstream of the universe," goes the refrain in *Willow*, but the blood is tired this time. The old legerdemain may save a kingdom, but it can't save this movie and, maybe, the fantasy genre. The man who soared on the zeitgeist can sink when it changes. George Lucas has worked his magic before and surely will again. But for now, the wonder wand is broken.

—By Richard Corliss

'Star Wars' creator resting but not exactly taking it easy

By JAY BOYAR
Orlando Sentinel

"Star Wars" update: George Lucas seems to get more work done when he's on vacation than a lot of people do when they're working full time.

Lucas is best known as the director of the first "Star Wars" movie (1977) and the executive producer of the second two films in the trilogy, "The Empire Strikes Back" (1980) and "Return of the Jedi" (1983). After the release of "Return of the Jedi," Lucas was said to be exhausted and looking forward to a long rest.

But the film maker seems to have his own definition of resting. Since "Return of the Jedi" was released, Lucas has served as an executive producer of "Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom" and has been designing several rides for Walt Disney World and Disneyland. He is also the executive producer of "Captain Eo," a 12-minute, 3-D movie to be shown at the Disney parks next year.

"I'm not as intense as I was when I was doing 'Star Wars,' but at the same time I'm not retired or anything," Lucas said in a recent telephone conversation. "I'm doing a lot of projects, but they're more controllable."

Another project on Lucas' agenda is the continuation of his "Star Wars" series. He said plans currently call for creating two additional trilogies. When these films are added to the "Star Wars" features he has already made, the grand total will be nine "Star Wars" movies.

The second trilogy, which



AP

Director George Lucas, right, has been getting a lot of work done while on vacation, including a project with Francis Ford Coppola.

will be Lucas' next "Star Wars" project, will be a prequel to the existing trilogy. (The third trilogy will be set after the trilogy already released.) At the time "Return of the Jedi" opened, the next "Star Wars" installment was expected to be ready five years later, in 1988. Lucas now believes that it will take longer to get the first film of the prequel trilogy produced, though just how long he could not say.

Lucas said the prequel will feature many of the same characters from the existing trilogy, but

that they will be approximately 40 years younger. In this second trilogy, we will see Darth Vader and Ben Kenobi as young Jedi knights. The characters will be played by different actors than they were in the existing "Star Wars" trilogy, said Lucas.

And what about R2D2 and C-3PO, the lovable droids who virtually stole the show in the "Star Wars" series? Surely we haven't seen the last of them.

"I really haven't decided yet," said Lucas.

KNT News Wire

The Airy Atmosphere of 'Willow' Land

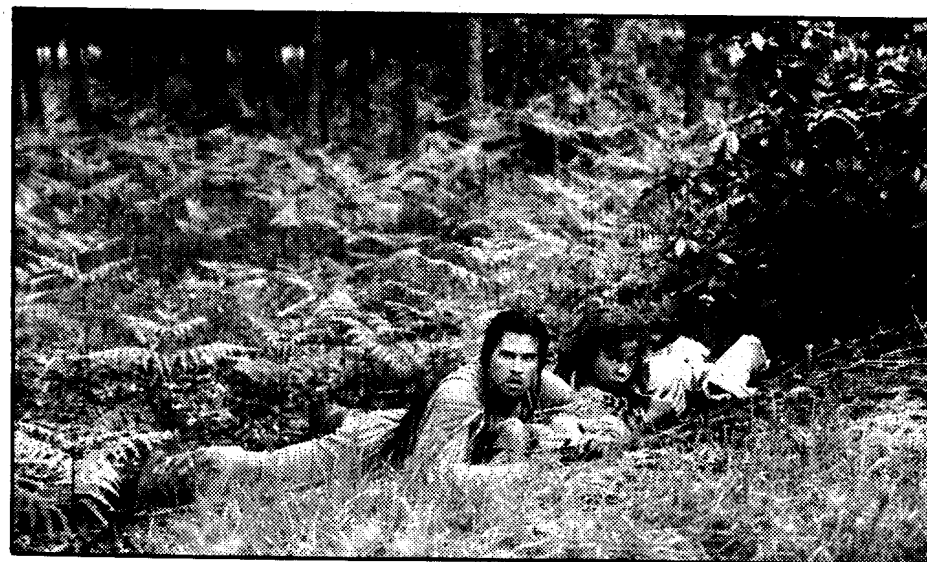
By SHEILA BENSON,
Times Film Critic

'Willow" (citywide) is a perfectly agreeable tale of magic, little people, heroic warriors, babies among the bulrushes and a wicked queen who must be overthrown lest the world be engulfed in evil. If it evaporates from memory with the airiness of a bubble bath, at least it leaves a friendly glow and a sense of a magical world lovingly evoked.

"Willow" suffers by being known as the long-planned project of George Lucas, its executive producer, who chose Ron Howard to direct and newcomer Bob Dolman to write from Lucas' own story. Any movie in the fantasy vein with the Lucas stamp on it comes with a heavy load of expectation.

If you're taking a little hand-holder to this concoction, you may be relieved to find that it's not a ponderous dead weight, like "Krull," of thudding memory. But for all its charm and considerable invention, "Willow" is never going to insinuate itself into the world's unconscious like "Star Wars."

The Lucas fervor is here, that amazing ability to create worlds of imagina-



Val Kilmer, left, and Warwick Davis star in George Lucas' "Willow."

tion and sustain them with a combination of guile and glee. But the unique "Star Wars" edge—sophistication enough for adults, wonder enough for kids, effects enough for both—is softened and sweetened here, whether by the presence of another director or not is hard to say.

The adventures befall Willow Ufgood, a staunch little Nelwyn, one of a miniature race of farmers and miners. He's played by a dauntless 3-foot-4 18-year-old, Warwick Davis, who a few years ago was busy acting inside a furry Ewok suit in "Return of the Jedi."

Despite his years, Davis somehow

manages to be convincing as a husband and father and, best of all, as a living example to young children that not all derring-do has to wait until you're big. (Davis may also have the most beautiful hands of any screen actor since John Barrymore.)

Feelings vary, but over in this corner, when the final battle is in full swing and the treacherous Queen Bavmorda (Jean Marsh) is zapping lightning bolts around like some accident in Thomas Edison's lab, the tendency to yawn becomes almost overwhelming. On the other hand, every minute spent in the world of the Nelwyns, who have the charm of all Seven Dwarfs at once and the Munchkins, too, seems to rush by. Adventure-hungry kids may find it just the other way around.

It's Willow's tiny children who start things. They bring home a basket they've rescued from the river, containing Elora Danan, which is not some new variety of yogurt, but a red-haired baby girl who, by prophecy, will bring down the empire of Queen Bavmorda. Although he'd much rather stay safely at home, Willow dutifully sets out to take this baby back to the land of the Daikini, the big people.

Please see 'WILLOW,' Page 8

'WILLOW': Airy Climate in Latest Lucas Fantasy

Continued from Page 1

And so the adventure is off and loping. Next on the scene is a sort of low-rent warrior, Madmartigan (Val Kilmer), who fits right into the Han Solo/Harrison Ford tradition of scruffy heroes-in-spite-of-themselves. Kilmer's physicality and his humor are nicely balanced, making Madmartigan a fine, lusty performance. He's joined by a pair of 9-inch special-effects Brownies, Rool and Franjean (Kevin Pollak, Rick Overton), who seem to speak pure Billy Crystal.

The Darth Vader this time is General Kael (Pat Roach) in a toothy skull mask, while the Queen's daughter is herself a warrior, the red-haired Sorsha (Joanne Whalley), whose feats soon catch Madmartigan's eye.

If adventure movies have progressed at all since the days when men and boys did it all, it's in characters like Sorsha and the benevolent magician Razi (Patricia Hayes). This sorceress has to change into a half-dozen animal forms before she can shake a particularly nasty spell of Bavmorda's, but her final, proper incarnation is as a woman in her 70s, old

enough to know *everything*. It's a refreshing switch on that relentless ingenue, Glinda the Good.

As always, the look of the picture is impeccable--the Nelwyns' houses, igloo-shaped huts with a faintly Mediterranean look to their plaster walls, are set in a wonderfully inventive Renaissance Pleasure Faire village (Marin County ways die hard). There are a few fearsome inventions, like those hounds from hell, the Devil Dogs, and the costumes, the makeup and the hairdressings seem especially fine. (This is probably the first time Billy Barty went entirely unrecognized, and Val Kilmer's wild, braid-

ed hair may start yet another trend.)

But we're grasping at straws here. By the end, "Willow" (MPAA-rated PG) is all roaring monsters being flung about castle walls and duels to the death in Bavmorda's chambers... time for the adults to grab their hats and beat a quiet retreat.

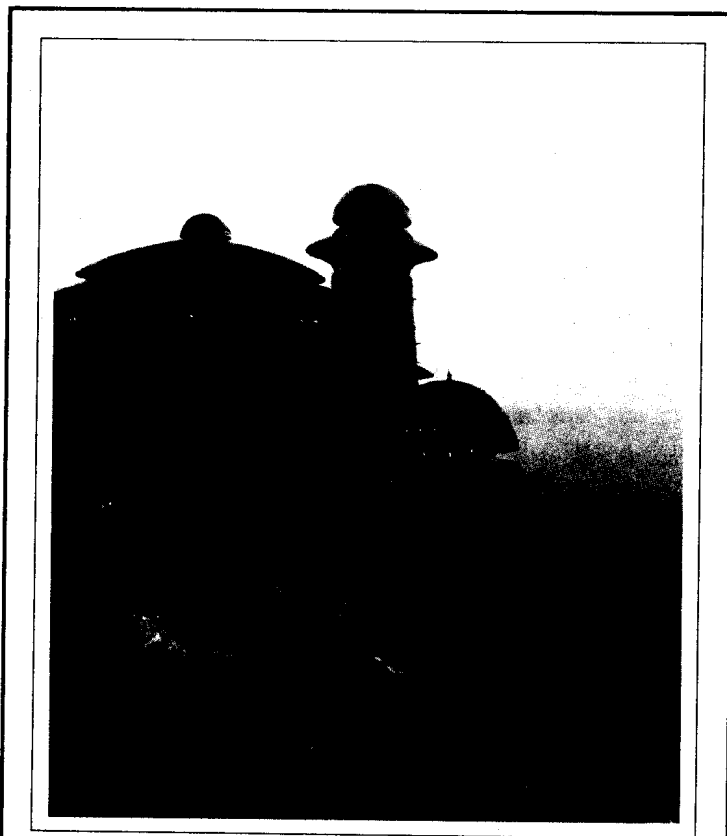
It's too bad, since Lucas so clearly wants his films to do good and to carry positive messages. Willow and Madmartigan very nearly bring it off, but in the end they're engulfed as effects overwhelm character and this slim story.

'WILLOW'

A Lucasfilm Ltd. film presented by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Executive producer George Lucas. Producer Nigel Woolf. Director Ron Howard. Story, Lucas. Screenplay Bob Dolman. Music James Horner. Camera Adrian Biddle. Production design Allan Cameron. Associate producer Joe Johnston. Visual effects Industrial Light & Magic, Dennis Muren, Michael McAlister, Phil Tippett. Special effects supervisor John Richardson. Costumes Barbara Lane. Editors Daniel Hanley, Michael Hill. Chief makeup artist Alan Boyle. Second-unit director Micky Moore. With Val Kilmer, Joanne Whalley, Warwick Davis, Jean Marsh, Patricia Hayes, Billy Barty, Pat Roach, Kevin Pollak, Rick Overton, David Steinberg, Gavan O'Herrin.

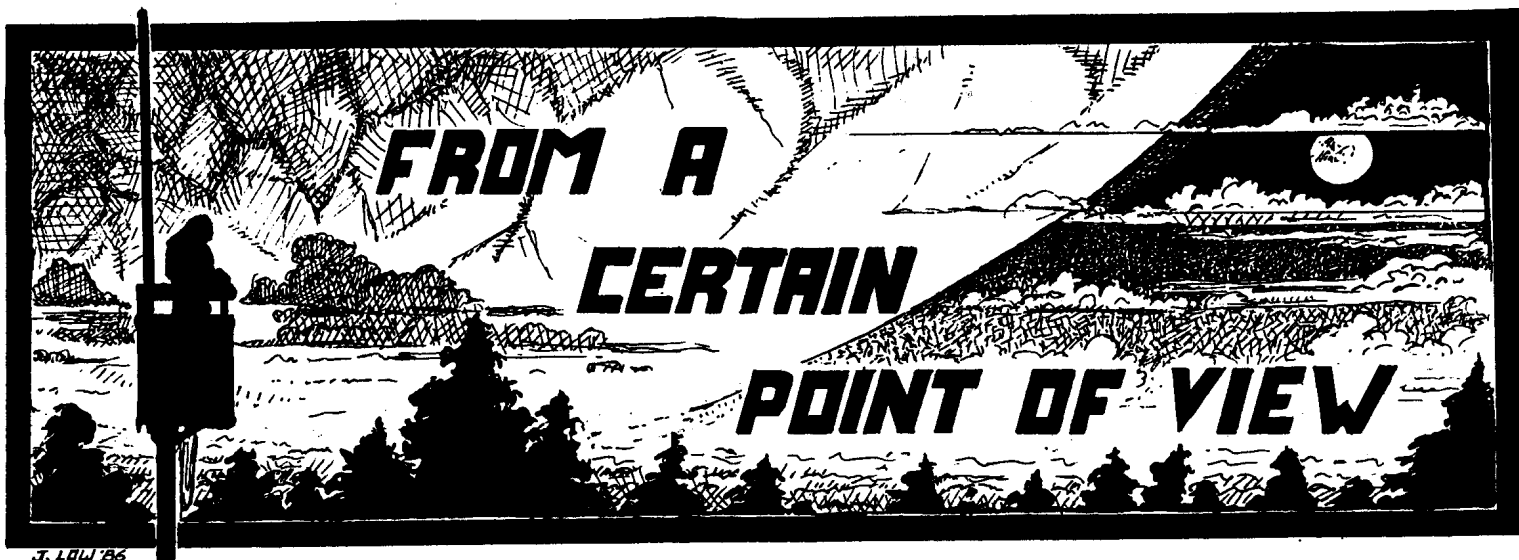
Running time: 2 hours, 5 minutes.

MPAA rating: PG (parental guidance suggested)



Tatooine





Ming Wathne
437 Via Roma
Santa Barbara, CA 93110

March 7, 1988

Well, the faster I go, the behinder I get, but at last I have the use of the typer, so here is a letter.

Lin Ward: The temptation to use or misuse power—Luke was tempted to use his power, but he questioned his right to do so. Vader obviously did not.

As far as Yoda taking everything in stride, after 900 years, I doubt he would be surprised at anything.

Debbie Kittle: Well, there were no little labels stating open or close. Unless you have a schematic, hot wiring on anything that is not as simple as a car can be chancy—trial and error sort of thing.

Melanie Gutierrez: Hopelessly in love with SW, join the club! I guess I can't say I am exactly a new fan any longer. My first LoC is dated '86. But I am not really an old fan either—some of my zines are dated in '79. I know exactly how you felt about the bottom dropping out of the SW

world. The greatest thing to remember is WE ARE SW! If we keep it going, it won't die, in spite of Lucas, STARLOG, or anyone else!

Maggie Nowakowska: Agree with you about the war chief parallel. The peculiarity of a military organization is the necessary need of having both the extremely regimented (in the Air Force, the Blue Angels—exact discipline is critical here) and also the more or less "seat of the pants" originals (Pappy Bowington's Black Sheep of WW2). I would gladly leave the coordination of managing both to someone else.

Dr. Mary Urhausen: Well! A bunch of nuts! Come on, Mary! SF fans have just as tight a grip on reality as the Sports Nut, the Stamp Nut, the Boating Nut, or the Golf Nut. In my estimation, chasing balls around, or getting soaked to the skin in an icy wind, or paying huge amounts for little pieces of paper could really qualify as Nuts—if I cared to qualify. If you enjoy a hobby and hurt no one in the process, who can or has the right to criticize anyway?

Melanie Rawn: In our part of the country, we don't have mirrors or heavy pictures over our beds or seating places. Living in Earthquake Country gives one a very different view about interior decorating. My method to soothe nerves is to listen

to John Williams.

Matthew Whitney: Agree with you about the female competition in "/" stories. Replace the female with a male and do away with the competition.

Catherine Churko--and Ye Editor: Aw, come on now, how come one of the best plastic surgeons was a woman, one of the best astrophysicists? There were women doctors, dentists, mechanics, nurses, druggists, cooks and dress designers. And the foremost expert on Technicolor was a woman. They were homemakers and mothers also, but let's not go overboard on stereotyping. Some things were off limits, but not as bad as is sometimes depicted.

Now, as for the Force talent, I think it was something like singing. Some people could be prima donnas, some could hardly whistle.

Jim Blaes: The Zine Library set its own rules--and while I might have wished it otherwise, I was happy enough to get what I did. It was a terrific help for my zine collection (I am pushing 300 at this time). I am very grateful to the people who took their time and spent their energy to do this.

Carolyn Golledge: Hi, mate! Re the forest fires--well, not all forests burn at the drop of a torch. Many types of vegetation are really somewhat fire resistant. It has been well documented that in pre-white man days, the Indians cleared the underbrush in the redwoods by setting the brush afire. These fires burned the underbrush but seemed to do little damage to the trees. And the rather peculiar Bristle Cone Pine must actually be exposed to fire in order to seed.

Sigh--enough for now. Have to give the typer back to the secretary before she kills me.

Peace in the Force.

April 22, 1988

See--said I'd get another letter to you. Whether on time, well that's another matter. Now...

Carolyn Golledge: Come on', mate, Han's got to have the Force. Not the same way Luke has. It's different, like the differences between singing and humming.

Catherine Churko: My rescue missions are for Millennium Falcons and others. I now have a Vader without cape and saber, a nude Luke, a Boba Fett who can't stand up, and two Imperial fighters and three Millennium Falcons--all very sad refugees from a swap meet or trash bin; and some day, ah,

some day, we get repaired...

With you, I too thank all the authors-editors, and artists who have continued to make SW live. I love to read SW (either that or I am a masochist, since I now have over 325 zines. And I scream very loudly when I miss progression and will even resort to a mild form of Black-ma--(better skip that). So thank you, all authors, editors, artists and poets and puzzle makers for the many hours of enjoyment you have given me.

Barbara Gardner: The quakes! It's all the Dark Lord's fault, but I'll get my revenge. I'll put itch powder in his armor.

Jim Blaes: Well, the great creator of all initiated life. I believe in a soul, even if I've never seen one; whether a clone has a soul is something I would not reasonably care to determine. You could really get involved in whether a soul starts at conception, and what happens to the soul when the body dies? The fact that conception as such was artificial would not necessarily rule out a soul, but even the Emperor and Vader probably had souls, if perhaps not very pleasant ones.

Chris Callahan: The so-called "feminine" idea that grew out of the '60's was about as valid as saying all women have black hair. Biology and economics mandated much of the so-called sexual behavior on both sides. Many of the so-called freedoms of today are simply because of the fact that progress is being made in controlling child bearing and child care. In reverting to a national type of modified tribal existence for child care, women are free to do other things, as they no longer have the responsibility of caring for the offspring, while the male provides the wherewithal to keep the family going. The reaction to Leia under the foregoing society would be expected. It is society that often dictates sexual roles and technology that often changes the society. Control child bearing, and you change society. Personally, I think Leia is one heck of a woman.

Sarah Cohen: Hello and welcome. A new fandom fan and only six hours away. I like that.

Melanie Rawn: What's in a name--well, if you have a regular name, you generally want something more exotic. If unusual, something more common. It often depends on how much static you had in school. As for a person's private universe, yeah, I like mine, too. Yet I get such a charge out of all the others. One of my greatest fantasies is what would happen if Carolyn Golledge and Pat

D'Orazio wrote a story together.

Melanie Guttierrez: I am not the mystical, mythical type. An adventure--certainly. A human adventure with good and bad, kind and mean, selfish and caring. The Force is just another source which is stronger in some than others. I agree with you about Lucas whole-heartedly--them's my feelings exactly.

Cindy Rodriguez: Well, I don't believe in a grand chess master, so my comments really would not have any validity.

Barbara Brayton: Han was not stupid for chasing down the Death Star corridor. Han had not lived as a smuggler for 10 years (this seems to be the general estimate) by being stupid. He did the unexpected and it worked--the troopers did retreat. In a tight situation, one can't always work out a game plan before acting.

Lin Ward: No, Lin, I don't think Vader became unbrainwashed. Palpatine and Vader were much alike--power hungry. The difference: Palpatine was a sadist; Vader was not. Vader wanted Luke because Luke was "his," not just another Jedi.

Maggie Nowakowska: Maybe some don't talk about the Fan dirty linen, but, Maggie, I do loud and long. A thief is a thief, and a dead beat, a dead beat. If they have a reason for their actions, let us know. Otherwise, be prepared to take the flack of those actions publicly.

Dr. Mary Urhausen: You have seen "slash" fiction. Where? Where!? I have seen only one story, and, for that general type, it was generally well done. Some rather obvious holes in the story, but not as ridiculous as most of the type. Being a Fan Zine Fan who practically absorbs stories through my skin, I would like to see some of this material others have "seen" or "heard" about.

Bev Clark: I like your hypothetical situation. The only difficulty I see is how does that jibe with the scene in the Ewok village where Luke and Leia talk about Leia's "real" mother? The part about Obi-Wan not knowing about Leia's ability! I think certain Force talents were sex-related and Yoda's reference to another did not necessarily refer to Leia. His statement about another Skywalker was only to tell Luke he was not alone. In the Force, the talents of the male and female were quite different.

Deborah Kittle: Yeah, the Star Tours, it is great. I too hope for a repeat trip and I want those posters also. And why do I get this vague

impression that you also are a Han Fan addict? As for the snow, I love to see a picture, but you can have the actuality. I definitely will take Tatooine instead of Hoth.

Well, Cheree, hope this gets to you in time. Til next time, peace in the Force.

Must Read

Roseann Magda
PO Box 11328
Chicago, IL 60611

March 22, 1988

I missed the deadline again for a letter to SE, but I've decided that, rather than winning the "under the wire" award for 18, I'll be early for 19.

SE has been on my must-read list for several years. It's the best way to find out what's happening with both the professional and fannish SW worlds. It's held to SW and not been swayed to other momentary fads. Unfortunately, that's happened to many people in SW fandom.

Thanks for printing the articles about the reunion in L.A. and Richard Marquand. It shows what happens when you miss a couple issues of the newspaper--I didn't even know Marquand had died.

I enjoyed reading about the L.A. SW get-together. It sounded like a terrific weekend. One of life's remaining innocent pleasures is a good wallow in SW, and I'm sorry to have missed the chance to do it.

It was interesting to see, in the latest two issues, how many people talked about the "death" of SW fandom. It seems like there has been a shake-out of sorts in SW fandom. Several of the early hard-core fans have burned out. Long-running, well-known zines have folded. A great deal of the early drive and excitement has faded. As a long-time fan, I've seen it and wondered at the causes.

I believe there are several reasons why SW fandom may have bottomed out recently. The first, and most obvious, is the lack of fresh material

from Lucasfilm. Fen are still hoping that the series will be continued on film, but George Lucas has not shown any great desire to resume work on the saga. The most realistic hope fans have is that Lucas will overspend on Skywalker Ranch and be forced to return to the Saga for infusions of major cash.

Lucasfilm demonstrated its lack of interest in SW by disbanding the Star Wars Fan Club after several years of profitable organization. This excellent method of maintaining and/or re-igniting interest in the movies has been completely abandoned.

Nor have publications been forthcoming from Lucasfilm. No more Han Solo or Lando Calrissian books, nor anything else about main characters. Some fans have expressed a desire to see Lucas' legendary nine notebooks of background material published. If this appeared, it would certainly stimulate greater interest and excitement. However, I don't think we'll ever see them--first, because I doubt they exist, and second, because (assuming they do exist), Lucas is not interested.

What does this all mean to fandom? It means easy access to material has been closed off. It means there is no definitive word being handed down from atop Skywalker Ranch. It means that fans will have to reach within themselves to perpetuate the Saga.

Some fans have been perpetuating the Saga since 1977. For 10 years, they've reached within themselves to present their dreams, ideas, and products of their imaginations in print to us. In 1988, many of them are burned out. Some have acquired families, homes, new or better jobs, and have had to decide what was really important in their lives. No person can be faulted for that. The result, though, is a lull in major fannish activity.

All this has led me to wonder, reluctantly, if SW fandom is dying a natural death. A few recent issues of SE made me wonder if I was a prophet before my time, since every other letter seemed to be asking the same question. Then I read that a STARLOG article had prompted the debate. Well, hearing that STARLOG started it all was reassuring. I dropped my subscription a few years ago when the editor made some comments I thought were sexist and demeaning, and lost all respect for the publication then. So, if STARLOG said it, it was probably wrong.

Secondly, seeing all the letters in the last

issue of SE was very reassuring. Several people wrote to say that they were new fans and had just discovered SW. Hurray! New blood!

So, thank you, neofen, and all you long-time fans, for helping to keep SW alive. And, especially, thanks to you, Cheree, for keeping up with SE. You've managed to keep it lively, informative and mind-boggling. I especially love it when people write in with all their scenarios and/or explanations. I'm continually amazed at their imagination and thoughtfulness. Every back issue is covered with penciled-in comments along the margins. Even re-reading years-old issues, I still get blown away. Thanks to all of you, SW isn't just alive, it's growing and expanded.

((Ed: Thanks for a king-sized egoboo, Roseann! But I can't claim any credit except to putting SE into the form you get it! There wouldn't be a letterzine like SE if it weren't for all the people who read and contribute to it! You guys are the real stars!))

L&L's Mother

Marti Schuller
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March 30, 1988

Hello, everyone. I really enjoyed this issue of SE and can't tell you how much I've come to look forward to each new issue already. Cheree, you are a very admirable lady to accomplish so much--wife, mother, zines and work pressure, too. How do you do it? Katy is certainly growing up fast and cute as a baby Ewok. I have a mental image of her years from now, travelling the country and running into people who've watched her grow through the pages of SE. Famous before age one.

I was alarmed to read of your medical malady last Thanksgiving. I'm vastly relieved your illness was no more serious (it sounded too much like a mild stroke to me) and I hope in future you're

able to avoid such stressful situations as led to it. Much as we all love SE and TREMOR, you mean more. Slow down and gaze at the stars now and then, okay?

I'm also sorry that my first year at MediaWest, you may not be attending. I honestly look forward to meeting you someday, but I definitely appreciate parental complications and financial straits. Best of luck on starting your own freelance business and hearty congrats on leaving your last job. It wasn't worth the physical toll it was obviously taking. Remember, the Force is with you.

I loved the Richard Dreyfuss letter and concur with his sentiments. I was also glad to see where Mr. Spielberg and Mr. Lucas were getting out to D.C. to speak against colorization, etc. (That's my fav. pet peeve at the moment.)

Now, on to some of the others.

Deborah Kittle: Thanks for the compliment on my first letter. Let me know when you find time to read those DRAGONLANCE books. They're fun escape reading.

Bev Clark: I enjoyed reading your version of Leia's title and how she came by it. I personally feel that L&L's mother was taken in by the Organas after Anakin's fall and that she died soon after the twins were born, grief-stricken over the presumed death of her dear mate. I portray Bail's wife as unable to bear children and a second mother to Leia, anyway. When her real mother dies, Bail and his wife take Leia as their own. I feel only a few court attendants and servants would know Leia was not royal-born, but, even if it was widely known, I see Bail more as a royal figurehead than sole ruling monarch. Hence his ability to serve as Senator. Leia would retain vague memories of her mother, but she'd thrive under the Organas' love and care. At some point in her life (probably as a teen), I'm sure she would reveal interest in her real mother. The Organas could explain that she had been a good friend to them, who'd died in grief over the death of her husband, and Leia would more than likely accept it. Perhaps the tragic story of her real mother actually affected Leia's reaction later to Han. She might fear such strong emotion and attachment, recalling the tragedy.

I also feel quite strongly that Vader never knew his wife was pregnant. Otherwise doubts of paternity would certainly arise in his mind, given your scenario. I don't feel Obi-Wan was ignorant of Leia as the "other" in TESB. Perhaps he was

surprised at Yoda's suggestion, not thinking of it himself, or maybe he sensed more behind Yoda's words. I love your idea of Vader as the "other" and haven't heard this theory before. Anyway, it's fun to trade ideas.

Maggie Nowakowska: I truly enjoyed your remarks on the film article. I too feel that others may envy fans their escapes and ability to savor the "unusual." Perhaps there'd be more of us if others could learn as we have that it's all right not to follow the norm or bend to the accepted behavior set by nameless, faceless masses. I used to view fans of ST in skeptic wonder myself, but once fired by SW and bolstered by the knowledge that intelligent, mature individuals made up 90% of fandom, I found a world of joy that had been closed to me before. Not to mention finding an outlet for my long frustrated, pent-up writing hunger. Fans should remember to extend a sympathetic hand to the "mundanes." You never know when one might turn out to be a closet fan.

Also, I second your recommendation of the TV series BEAUTY AND THE BEAST. At long last, real fantasy and romance.

If you learn where to get that fabulous bumper sticker, please share it! I want at least two!

Lin Ward: I have news you may appreciate, as well as others interested in securing the SW plates. I receive a mail order catalog called **Downs' Collectors Showcase**, 2200 South 114th St., Dept. 188, Milwaukee, WI 53227-0904. The last few issues have featured all seven plates in color for \$29.50 ea. plus p & h. I've not purchased any, saving for MediaWest as I am, but the catalog is fun and filled with fantasy, ST, SW and other nice pieces for any interested. Hope it helps.

Cindy Rodriguez: Thank you from all we Luke lovers!

Melanie Guttierrez: Maybe I'm a minority, but I enjoy the SW saga as an epic space fantasy, filled with interesting characters and human conflicts eventually overcome. Sort of a fairytale for all ages in space. All the deep philosophical delving into Mr. Lucas' reasoning only lessen the enjoyment for me. Of course, we all have individual perceptions of the Force and the heroes' future, etc. and that's fine. Sharing our ideas can be fun and enlightening, but trying to find absolutes behind the creation of the saga without knowing Mr. Lucas' thoughts is a bit like trying to describe God. No two will ever fully agree.

Also, as a writer, I find even with my humble efforts, readers sometimes see things that even I wasn't consciously aware of. I'm sure we fans see much more than Mr. Lucas may have intended. It's a saga of films, not religion, folks.

As for boycotting all LFL offerings, sorry but I whole-heartedly disagree. I, for one, am grateful to Father George for sharing his galaxy with us and I could never stoop to such petty attempted blackmail as you suggest. Besides, I could miss some good movies, too. After all, we do not own SW or Mr. Lucas. He really owes us nothing. We should celebrate the films we have and wish their creator well. Of course, I'd love to know his ideas and plans for the beginning and ending of SW just like everyone else, but perhaps, like real life, there can be no true start or finish. Meanwhile, there is fandom to satisfy my needs. For your sake, I hope you forego your obstinancy in this area. Come on, aren't you just a wee bit curious about WILLOW?

Melanie Rawn: Your comments on writing are wonderful! You so nicely expressed the ego's point of view clash with reality. Sometimes it is hard to admit our ideas are not everyone's and accept other opinions. I catch myself saying things like, "It's a good story, but it wasn't my Luke." Guess we're all guilty to some degree or other?

I'm also glad to learn that other writers can confess to writing for themselves first and their readers second. Is that why criticism of a piece we especially love cuts deep enough to cause blood loss?

Sarah Cohen: Welcome! It's so good not to feel alone anymore in my new status. Yes, The Belgariad did remind me some of SW, but many things do. After all, there are just so many basic characters for fantasy, in space or not, and just so many basic situations and emotions. The talent to bring them to life and to make them seem new and fresh is what counts.

Tim Blaes: Thanks for the welcome. But shy? Me? I'm just new to this. Wait. You'll see.

Barbara Gardner: Yes, Veronica Wilson's told me about you, but only that you're a true Vader fan as she is. I, too, wish we could get her involved with SE. Let me know when you've gotten and read those Dragonlance books. I know you'll love Raistlin. He's so fascinatingly evil.

Thanks too for your kind comments on my work. If Veronica doesn't loan you my stories, just drop

me a line. I'm always looking for fresh victims.

Catherine Churko: I can't tell you how much your remarks on my story "Secret of the Sith" from FR9 mean to me, but as an artist of worth yourself, you must know. I really appreciate the input. A writer of fanfic only knows if they've succeeded with a piece through reader feedback. I confess that I've been guilty in the past with slighting artists in my LoCs, but hopefully I have rectified that now.

And, are you kidding?! It took SE before you realized there were others of us who salivate over that luscious Jedi? You are far from alone, and as you mentioned, WC's inside cover is guaranteed to drive the pulse rate of any Luke fan to post-aerobic measures! Be still my heart!

Carolyn Colledge: I want to resoundingly second Cheree's notes to you this last issue (18). All of your friends and fans are positively vibrating good Force pulses your way and praying that you feel better soon. You are a special friend and wonderful person whose talents include more than incredible writing. I'm proud to know you.

When you do feel stronger, though, we must discuss your Han/Yoda comparisons in more detail. Intiguing idea.

Now, Munchkin, follow the yellow brick road to health. (Sorry, Carolyn, I couldn't resist.)

Well, must end this novella before I earn Cheree's wrath for overtyping the page limit. One note to "Tidbits"; I live only a few miles from the town of Harrisonville. And me a Luke fan, too. See you all at MediaWest or next issue of SE.

Happy summer.



Debbie Kittle
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April 12, 1988

Happy spring (yuck) to you all. Can't wait for winter again.

Anyone like FRANTIC? I loved it. From the people I've talked to (mostly from work after my recommendation) didn't like it. They thought it too slow paced. I never felt it was slow paced at all. I enjoyed Harrison's performance very much as well as his stuffed animal.

Bev: On your thoughts re Ben not knowing about Leia being the Other. Perhaps he just didn't think of Leia having Force potential. Luke may have shown it early or Ben was able to detect it yet not so with Leia. I don't think he would've been ignorant of Leia's birth. I feel he had a very important role throughout Mrs. S's life.

Marti: Excellent question you posed re blood in ANH but not in TESB. I had always assumed (never assume--it can get you into trouble) that a lightsaber is a cauterizing weapon as we see in TESB when Vader cut off Luke's hand, therefore sealing the blood vessels. I went back to see ANH since it had been a long while since my last viewing. What I saw was a pool of fresh blood but nothing spurting out.

There are several large veins and arteries in the forearm and elbow yet smaller ones in the wrist and hand. Perhaps some of the blood escaped before Ben was able to sever it completely or, as some fanzine writers have done, is give the lightsaber a series of settings. If Ben had it on a lower setting, it would cause it not to seal quickly. With no blood spurting or seeping out of the severed arm, that does mean that the vessels have been sealed.

Never gave much thought to Jedi eating habits. I assumed (there's that nasty word again) that they were omnivorous. I remember an episode of SPACE 1999 called "The Rules of Luton" where Maya and Koenig landed on a vegetation covered planet. Maya picked some flowers and the trees accused them of murder and put them on trial.

How could the Jedi eat something that had the Force? Did they survive on rations all the time? From Yoda's point of view, they must not have ("How you get so big eating food of this kind?").

Yoda fed Luke a stew. Perhaps it was all right to eat plants, insects and reptiles. Though they may be part of the Force as a whole, they may not be perceived as intelligent feeling creatures. ((Ed: On the other hand, we don't know what was in that stew! It might have been made from scavenged parts of already dead plants and animals, hence Luke's expression when he tasted it.))

Maggie: For the bumpersticker problem, you might try: T & K Graphics, PO Box 1951, Baltimore, MD 21203. They have an excellent and wide variety of stickers, posters, notepads, stationery and bumperstickers on fantasy/SF. Their merchandise is of a very good quality and reasonably priced. If they don't have the exact ones you're looking for, they do take suggestions.

Melanie G.: Wow, what a tirade but I can't blame you for the way you feel. I sometimes feel like that but I can only hope that George gets to work on it after WILLOW and INDY III.

I went back to ROTJ to hear the Emperor laugh but all I heard was the laugh of an Ewok.

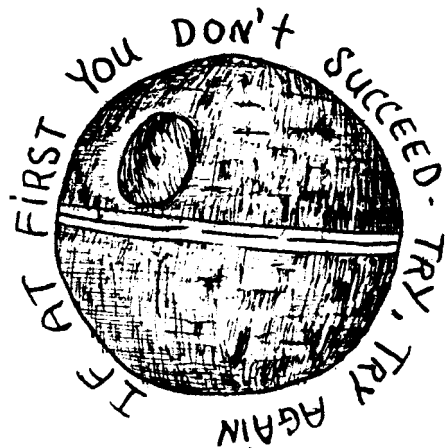
Sarah: Welcome to another neophyte.

Catherine: A few of my friends and I have lusted after Han for years also, but after coming to SE and reading all the past issues, I feel the scale is definitely on Luke's side. And now to find out that the evil dastardly Darth is in the running for our lust votes (only if he looked like Duncan), sends shivers of the Darkside up and down my spine.

Tim: I don't write comments on the pages of SE but on notebook paper. Then polish it up into letter form.

"DV:junk food"? Maybe the Ewoks would've considered DV junk food had they roasted him instead of Luke?? Oh, well.

Until next ish, make your day better. Sn(m)uggle a Corellian.



Matthew Whitney
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April 9, 1988

Sorry I missed everyone last time. This LoC will have to begin with a bit of catch-up reactions from SE17:

Great issue, as always, that I was able to read at my leisure (so much so that I missed the deadline). It distressed me, though, that I too casually phrased a comment in issue 16 and was misinterpreted by Catherine Churko. I could really soap-box on my "two-bit third world country" statement, but this is neither the time nor the place. What I did mean, Catherine, had nothing to do with the people of these countries, the degree of how technically advanced they are/are not, or whether their simple lifestyle was good or bad. Unfortunately, I didn't make that clear, and you understandably took it in a way I'd not meant. (And I thank you for catching me on it.) My back-handed comment was a slap at petty dictatorships, often financed by drug profits or at the expense of hard working, suppressed populations, or even when there is an honest government, many are held hostage by crime lords. This is all off the track of what SE is about and I raise it only because of the misunderstanding was brought out in these pages.

Jim, your comments on Creation Cons were heard and appreciated. I went to both SW/STARLOG/Creation Cons in my area (Boston & NYC), and a few others Creation have hosted, and must say they have deteriorated in the last year. Peter Mayhew was the guest at both SW cons. A VERY nice man, though he seems terribly shy. He tells some fun stories and really seems to appreciate the fans coming out to see him to tell him we appreciate what he has contributed to the Saga (a LOT!). As much as we love Peter, though, don't we deserve a bit more for a 10th anniversary celebration, especially considering the lengths they went to in L.A.? I didn't expect Lucas or any of the main three, but I'm sure if they'd offered the \$ they could have gotten someone else. At the other cons, my complaint is that we have been subject to second-rate accommodations (i.e., the small facilities on the top floor, rather than the BARN on the mezzanine). This, despite ever-growing crowds. Reason: penny pinching. I'm almost tempted to boycott, but I want to

see the guests (especially ST:NGers--I love the show). Creation could learn from some fan run events, though all fan cons aren't perfect either.

Onto SE 18:

Linda Deneroff: You've triggered a batch of thoughts, centering on "Was Vader mistaking Leia's Force aura for Luke's in TESB?" Given that everyone in the SW universe (and ours?) has Force patterns, whether they are Force-users or not, that may be read by those who are Force-sensitive, perhaps active Force-users change their aura as they employ their talents. This means they'd send out some sort of signal when they used the Force and might be how Darth first got an impression of Luke (when he used the Force in the trench run in ANH). Leia, however, is a non-Force-user, so why should Darth key onto following the Falcon from the Hoth ice-hanger? He'd sense natural Force patterns from those aboard, but no Force-users (Han-the-Jedi subscribers, please skip to next letter). I reason Darth arrived at the hanger, first figuring all remaining rebels would be attempting escapes from there, so it was a good starting place. Noting the Falcon being the last to depart and knowing the owner to be an associate of Skywalker, following and capturing the occupants is the most obvious course of action to take.

There is logic in assuming that the Force patterns of Luke and Leia were similar due to their brother/sister relationship. Also, these patterns would be similar to Darth's, so perhaps this is how he deduced Luke was his son. When he sensed the Force in Luke in the trench, it must have struck him as being very similar to his own. Back to Hoth, why did Darth not sense Luke still on the planet, and not leaving on the Falcon? Perhaps at this still early stage on his way to Jedi status, Luke used the Force for only certain, important skills, not all the time, switching it on and off, so to speak. If so, he may not have been reaching out to the Force to help him make his escape from Hoth. A lot of speculating here, I'm well aware, but this could fit into how Darth senses Luke's approach aboard the shuttle in ROTJ. There Luke seems to concentrate and reach out with the Force, perhaps gauging the situation to see if he can sense Darth around (perhaps too late realizing that it will also give himself away--he is a rookie Jedi, after all).

Deborah Kittle: I got the SW Role Playing Game book and Source Book. Both are quite nice,

especially the latter. If you want only one and especially if you're interested in background info, I suggest the SB. Lots of neat stuff, and I'm sure it will sit right next to the thesaurus on many a fan author's shelf.

Marti Schuller: I also write my fan lit long-hand, then have to type the final draft. A word processor is still years away at best, though I doubt I'll ever be able to justify the cost to myself for just fannish pursuits (I already spend WAY too much on stills).

Speaking of new toys, though, I did treat myself to a CD player--MAGNIFICENT. Sound quality is like going from mono to stereo. Worth every cent.

Marti, on why you see blood from the alien's chopped off arm in the cantina in ANH, while Luke's injury is perfectly cauterized in TESB? One simple explanation may be just a cleaner cut by Darth. Another reason brings to mind a favorite point of mine when I did a term paper in college on SW for my Art of Film class. I went into detail on why this scene was in the film, explaining that we needed to see what a lightsaber did, so Lucas had Ben hack up a pair of thugs, then showed a dramatically bloody limb on the floor of the bar. This established that a lightsaber was literally a laser sword. Without this, later if we'd seen Vader slash through Ben aboard the Death Star and him disappear, we might have thought him disintegrated by the strange weapon, like a ST phaser would have done. By establishing what the weapon did, then having the unexpected occur, we then knew to conclude that Ben's disappearance was some Force related hocus-pocus.

Maggie Nowakowska: Nice discussion about Leia. Definitely right about her weight in ANH--nothing wrong with it at all. According to SKYWALKING (or perhaps an interview with Carrie?), she was a bit over what they'd wanted her to be, but to me she looked great. Too thin women are a turn off.

Melanie Guttierrez: I think the Saga already is a combination of exhilarating, epic adventure, mysticism, and mythology, and when complete it will remain so. The largest portion is the adventure. Lucas is first an entertainer with the SW films, then story-teller, then myth-maker.

On GL himself, I must call you to task to defend the claim that SW is his "one and only brilliant idea." (your emphasis) What about THX-1138, American Graffiti, and Raiders? He is also partly

responsible for Twice Upon a Time (animated feature he exec-produced and I love) and Kurasowas's Kagemusha. In those last two, he's more just the money man behind them, but such was his role in Howard the Duck. I honestly enjoyed Howard for what it was, a dumb duck joke film with a goofy monster (pure comic book). My only beef is \$35 mill is outrageous to tell duck jokes, but it's not my money. About Lucas' successes, though, it must be acknowledged that Graffiti is the most successful film in history (counting % of gross over cost) and both Indy films were enormous box office successes. If you also take into consideration the work of ILM and Sprockett Systems, I don't think "SW is his one and only avenue of success" is a valid statement.

Personally, I look forward to each and every LFL project. Not all I've liked. The Ewok films are pure kid stuff, More American Graffiti stank, and Howard, though I chuckled, is his biggest stumble, but those stumbles are few compared to his successes. The future for Lucas? Willow looks to be terrific, and I am VERY anxious. I'm also looking forward to Tucker. I've seen previews for both and they appear to be quality efforts, and will be opening night events for my friends and I.

"Does the Emperor laugh at the end of ROTJ?" No way. I've been round and round with other LoCers on "hidden dialogue", which I contend does not exist, here and elsewhere, so I won't get started. My opinion is he is not heard in the film after he is blown up.

Tenth Anniversary stuff may still be available through Creation conventions (and by mail order). They advertise it in Starlog, I believe, or you could write them for details.

Tim Blaes and Catherine Churko: (Hello, again) You both made valid points on the "/" fiction topic, and they are well taken.

Harrison's new film, Frantic, was quite good. Good suspense and excellent acting. I loved Carrie's Amazon Women on the Moon; it spoofs B-grade, sci-fi flicks and nearly everything else. Mark Hamill's just begun a new film, in the SF vein, called Slipstream. It looks very promising.

Follow the Force...



Rachel Natasha Mohr
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April 2, 1988

Hello, everybody. I just received my first issue of SE not too long ago (no. 17), and I've written very few LoCs in my young life (something I hope to change), so if I sound like a fool, it's because I am. But what the heck? Life is short.

I'm Tasha, by the way. Though I still use my whole name frequently and as a byline, no one has ever called me Rachel. For a while I went only by Rachel in correspondence, to avoid confusion, but I quickly realized I couldn't stand it. Oh, the complications of going by a middle name...

Let me add myself to the list of people expressing unbridled joy over finding SE! Tho I've been a SW fan since I saw ANH, at the ripe old age of (barely) eight, I've only been a particularly active fan for about a year now. Like Melanie Guttierrez, I would've continued in "resigned isolation" had the article proclaiming SW fandom dead not raised my hackles and bruised my ego into doing something. I set about with a kind of grim determination to discover if I was, indeed, one of the last fen on earth. Happily, my search proved I was far from it! (Now, if I can only somehow keep from going broke trying to catch up on all the great zines, etc., that I've missed!)

My sympathies to all those who have recently had bad experiences (and congratulations, Cheree, on your new child!). I can empathize. If anyone out there knows me (though that's not a likely prospect), they know that I recently had to quit school and come home due to my Mystery Illness of the Year. It came early this year. A lot of tests have since been run and we've determined that it's nothing serious or overly threatening like leukemia or MS. The good doctors now think it's probably TMJ, a painful jaw condition (which would make sense since I'm currently enduring orthodontics).

There is no way that this LoC will get to you, Cheree, before the February 1 deadline for no. 18 (mainly since it was after that date that I learned of SE and it is now April 2), but there's always 19...

Interesting article reprint in no. 17: "Those Were the Days in Tatooine and Moscow," by Marc

Mancini. Mr. Mancini definitely was not a SW fan, but he was at least honest about his perspective as a non-fan. He seemed somewhat bemused and puzzled by all the fuss over SW. I didn't particularly appreciate his opening line ("This was going to be a weird one") or his comment that there "seems to be a white bread nerdiness to SW devotees." It was good to hear that I'm not in the same league with Moonies or Hare Krishnas, but I've known that all along.

Why was this "SW gathering" so troubling to him? And how in the world could he muster the gall to call it "amusing, bizarre, and a bit sad"? He was wary, wondering how healthy a fixation-driven event could be, but consider this: a philatelic convention is a fixation-driven event. A football or hockey game can be a fixation-driven event. A dog or cat show is a fixation-driven event. ((Ed: Not to mention political rallies, church services, Little League games, charity cake sales, Cub Scout meetings, county fairs, the Boston Marathon, you name it, ad infinitum.)) And I would NOT commit suicide if George decided not to make anymore SW movies. What a preposterous notion! I'd like to have a little conversation with the vendor who said that.

I also think that if the average non-fan would sit down and read a copy of SE from cover to cover, his/her perspective on SW fandom would undergo a dramatic change for the better. I happen to think that for the most part, we are a bunch of intelligent, happy, well-adjusted people, if I do say so myself. Mary Urhausen mentioned in no. 17 the Sept./Oct. FILM COMMENT article, and I agree with her--it is really a shame that the media almost always seem to seek out the few SW/ST/SF fans who are utterly bizarre, at the expense of the rest of us. It creates a greatly exaggerated stereotype. I don't own a chain-mail bikini, and I never wore Vulcan ears in school (in church once, but never in school...).

Well, you can't let it get you down. The replies to Anonymous are right. We've all had to put up with ridicule of one kind or another. Everyone who is different pays a price, but I enjoy being unique. I'm not bitter or terribly defensive, but I also know the difference between mundane reality and my own fantasy. I've accepted the fact that I'm out of the mainstream. Life may not always be totally smooth for me, and I may not always be understood, but the benefits of being my own person

of being different. (And I loved SPACEBALLS. I loved knowing I was the one in the theater who caught all those jokes the non-fen missed. Thanks, Mel Brooks!)

I think that Anonymous is letting her "fixa-tion" get out of hand. Mr. Mancini did make a valid point when he made the distinction between fans and fanatics. He said, "In a true cult, structures are so hidebound, authoritarian, and blind that even trivial variations are considered vulgar." I think this is, perhaps, what has happened to Anonymous. From what I gathered, she certainly does seem to feel that this trivial variation, a simple, good-natured parody of SF in general and SW in particular, is vulgar. How sad.

On other topics...

Melanie Guttierrez: Yes, I'm sure Luke is a perennially hot topic (nudge nudge, say no more!). WOOKIEE COMMOE 5 arrived last week and, ohh, that inside front cover! My glasses are STILL foggy! If SW fandom is dead, then I must be in heaven. (By the way, I really liked "Exceptions" in HIBERNATION SICKNESS. Congrats to you and Lorrie Cherry on an excellent story!)

Several people have discussed the possible reasons behind why Vader and the Emperor were able to defeat the Jedi. I got the impression that the Old Republic had been slowly slipping into the depths of corruption for a long time, and that Palpatine was a disaster waiting to happen. The OR had become so weakened by its own corruption that, where during its heyday it might have been able to withstand a man like the Emperor, it was now too vulnerable to do so. The prologue to the book STAR WARS likened the OR at the time of Palpatine's seizure of power to a great tree rotting from within.

This would to some degree explain why the Jedi were as unprepared as they must have been. As well, Lin Ward mentioned that maybe people who fell to the Dark Side were unable to handle it and ultimately did themselves in. This seems to be a likely possibility, especially in light of the mythological background of the Saga. It seems to be a recurring theme in mythology, spiritualism, and religion that good will be its own reward, and that evil will, in the end, destroy itself. Didn't even the Emperor eventually precipitate his own destruction? Luke was right when he said, "Your overconfidence is your weakness." Palpatine was so arrogant in his perceptions of his own Dark Power that he was blind to any possibility of failure.

that he was blind to any possibility of failure.

And I think Palpatine was an unusually strong Darksider. In the ROTJ novel, for instance, it mentions that when the Emperor finally attacks Luke directly, Luke, who we know has had many brushes with the Dark Side, has never felt such a total corruption of the Force. He was caught completely unprepared. This leads me to speculate that no one, not even Obi-Wan or Yoda, was aware of the true extent of Palpatine's power. Otherwise, Luke would have been better warned.

I agree with Maggie Nowakowska in that Palpatine must have come along at a weak time. He, and his success in corrupting Anakin, had to have been unusual and unexpected. Maggie's comment that perhaps Palpatine and Vader took a scientific rather than spiritual approach to the Force was interesting.

On another subject entirely, as I write this, I have just learned that Tasha Yar will be killed in the May 7/8 episode of ST:NG. I am miffed that they gave her so little to do that Denise Crosby is leaving the show. She is one of my favorite characters (name coincidence aside). She's a woman in a position of authority, she's tough, and she can handle herself quite well, yet she isn't cold or "butch." I wish they had given her character more development, and I think the show is losing out by letting her go.

Well, I'll end this now. Hope I did a job that was at least something approaching adequate on my first LoC to SE.

Walk the sky!



Bev Clark
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April 4, 1988

Melanie Guttierrez: Leaving aside George Lucas' ego and/or arrogance (both charges that have been made in the public press, including most recently in regard to his attempts to, ah, persuade the Marin County Board of Supervisors to grant him certain variances or he'll move his operations elsewhere), I want to comment on your remarks about his successes and failures.

First, you have to separate the movies he's been creatively involved with from those where he's merely been the money man or Lucasfilm the production company. In the first group are THX:1138, AMERICAN GRAFFITI and its sequel MORE AMERICAN GRAFFITI, the SW trilogy, and the Indiana Jones movies (and the upcoming WILLOW, whose fate is still to be determined). In the second are TWICE UPON A TIME, LABYRINTH, HOWARD THE DUCK, KAGEMUSHA, (and the upcoming TUCKER), as well as BODY HEAT, for which he served as uncredited executive producer according to Larry Kasdan. (I may have forgotten some in this group.)

Of the movies he's been creatively involved with, only THX:1138 and MORE AMERICAN GRAFFITI were not financially successful. AMERICAN GRAFFITI still has the highest return on investment of any movie ever made (more than 50 to 1); all three of the SW movies are among the top 10 grossing movies of all time, and I think RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK is too. TEMPLE OF DOOM didn't do as well but still made a profit (and a lot of money). Critically, reaction has been more mixed. AG and ANH won critical acclaim; both are considered by many movie critics to be among the best and most important movies of the 1970s, with AG actually making more "best of" lists than ANH. RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK also had glowing reviews, and TESB got generally good ones. TOD and ROTJ got mediocre reviews, THX got very mixed ones, and MORE AG was widely panned (with good reason--I liked the movie because I identified with one of the characters, but it isn't very good). However, THX became a cult hit in SF fandom almost immediately, and it is still discussed in film histories because of its superior art direction and cinematography. (Unfortunately, it puts me to sleep.)

The movies GL executive produced only are a more mixed bag. Most of them were not financially successful, as we all know. I think KAGEMUSHA did make money, but it was not intended for or marketed to a mass audience, and it cost very little to make by American standards. BODY HEAT didn't have Lucas' name on it, but it was both critically and financially successful; and, amazingly enough, HOWARD THE DUCK is predicted to break even in the end because it has been successful in Europe. Critically, KAGEMUSHA also did well; LABYRINTH got mixed reviews, TWICE UPON A TIME got generally negative ones, and we all know about HOWARD...

The point of this little excursion is that you can't say that only SW among Lucas' movies has been successful, therefore that's all he should make. He should certainly exercise better judgment in the movies of other people he chooses to back--and if he can't judge a good story, hire someone who can! It would help if he was a little less loyal to his friends; almost all the unsuccessful movies he's been associated with have been done by his friends. Personal loyalty is all very well, but some of the people are incompetent (Gloria Katz and Williard Huyck, for instance, should not be allowed near a camera again). This is not to say that I don't want to see another SW movie--I do! But if I were to suggest what GL should do based on his overall record, it would be to make more of his own movies, whatever they are. WILLOW may be a step in this direction.

And speaking of Lucasfilms, let's hear it for Sean Connery as Indiana Jones' father! (Let's hear it for Connery in any role in an Indiana Jones movie, or in any role at all, for that matter.) That's casting made in heaven--and proof positive that God must be female!

Which brings me to the LA TIMES article and Richard Dreyfuss' vitriolic response. Whether or not Dreyfuss is right in general about plots being revealed too early, WILLOW was the wrong movie to complain about. Cheree didn't print the dates of the article and the letter. However, the publisher sent the authorized novelization to book reviewers in 1987, in time for a review to be printed in the January 1988 LOCUS. Merchandisers knew the plot by January 1988 and had stills from the movie. The book was on sale to the public by February 1988. Lots of time for unscrupulous producers to rip off the plot. Which isn't going to be the major selling point of the movie, anyway, if the noveliza-

tion is anything like the final movie; the plot's a pretty conventional fantasy plot, with overtones of the story of Moses. If the movie is successful, it will have to be on account of the visual realization of the story.

I don't see why Jedi Knights couldn't have been carnivores or omnivores or whatever their individual cultures allowed. Even if one assigns a moral value to the type of food one eats, one could adopt the practices of some hunter-gatherer peoples, including some native Americans: recognizing the worth of the animals one kills and ritually thanking it for its sacrifice that the hunter and his or her people might eat. (Japanese laboratories, I've read, have similar ceremonies for their laboratory animals.)

I'm another who liked Leia from the beginning. The fact that she was short as well as feisty certainly helped (identification? me?). Also, maybe it helped that I never wanted Han, and I identified with, rather than lusted after, Luke, so that I wasn't jealous of that aspect of her part in the saga. She was active; she frequently took command from the men while they dithered; she was as ac-

complished as they were in the skills of a rebel.

As for her tube of lip gloss, Cheree, she hid it in the same place Han and Luke hid their usual clothes while they were in the stormtrooper get up.

Why can't SW be both an exhilarating adventure and have touches of myth about it? I think it's both; though I don't think it's actually myth (I think it's a fairy tale), it certainly has mythic elements. Myths and epics are themselves good stories; one of the differences between them and SW is that they were generally told aloud, while SW is meant to be viewed (this has to do mostly with the available technology). Even in the common mythos of the Western European-American world, much of Old and New Testaments consists of good stories even if you don't accord them any religious significance.

A friend of mine has "Stickshift Starship" painted on the trunk of her car. I've always liked that.

For your tidbits: how about Vader, Washington? Not to mention Lucas Valley (Marin County), California--which is also, I understand, the freeway offramp one takes to get to Skywalker Ranch.



Maggie Nowakowska
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April 25, 1988

Ack. It's the end of April already. Well, I'll make this a short one.

To contribute to Marti Schuller's informal survey of how people write their story drafts--although I do everything on either a typewriter or a WP program, I can report that not only does my better half do her first draft longhand, but she does everything save for the final, to-publisher draft by hand. In ink.

Still with Marti's letter, I suppose whether one thinks of the Jedi as vegetarians depends on PoV. My prejudice is that personal preference would determine practice, rather than being an overall philosophy concerned with this subject. Taking into consideration Yoda's description of the Force as that which permeates all living entities, and the emphasis on the importance of life over machinery that fills the Saga, I would posit that the ending of one life to sustain another could be seen as a normal event in the great circle of life. So long as that exchange was conducted with respect, it would be allowed. Death is part of life, and though most Terran cultures have recognized sorrow as a normal reaction to death, not all have treated death as fearsomely as ours has.

I'm reminded of the character in LeGuin's ROCONNAN'S WORLD, who, observing that he had become a vegetarian because he did not want to find himself discovering that yesterday's meal was actually sentient, then commented that he was in big trouble the day he discovered a world where vegetables could talk. In a universe where life takes on such diverse forms as in the SW universe, one would be forced to subsist on pills to avoid taking any kind of life. That sort of subsistence could easily be seen as mechanical, as a way of avoiding one's responsibility to recognize one's place in Life and the lessons life and death can teach us.

Cheree, in response to your comment on my polemic last letter, may I humbly suggest that Leia keeps her lip gloss in the same place Han and Luke keep their shaving equipment? At least it's believable that Leia's braids would stay up, fairly neat (although they're shown disheveled more than once); how Han keeps his locks so blow-dry perfect so much of the time is harder to understand. Maybe there's a special setting on his blaster?

Lin Ward: Your point about not all Jedi being good teachers is well taken, although I can see an emphasis in the group on the experience of teaching as a lesson in humility and keeping an open mind. In the martial art of aikido, everyone is expected to turn from taking a lesson to giving one just for those reasons. The emphasis is that we are all and always students, no matter our individual level of ability in the art. A great part of Kenobi's tragedy may be that an experience that in gentler times might have simply been a lesson in his own limitations as a teacher, in the Emperor's times turned into such a galactic disaster.

Barbara Brayton: Hi. In return, I meant to write privately to you long before the SE LoC deadline. However, since the solstice, life out here has been crazy and I've hardly written anyone at all. And the next 4 weeks promise as much insanity with travelling, visiting out-of-town relatives, etc. So, wary of boring other people, I'll answer your TW question quickly here and if you think the following explanation is bantha pd, drop me a line and we'll hash it out sometime in June. Promise.

You're correct--Volume 3 of TWC is "Counterpoint" under uniform TWC cover (and minus the non-TW Sky5 material), so you're

okay there if you have Sky5. As for Iain, let's say he's certainly going to spend some time in hospital. I think a good rule of thumb to follow in TW is: if it's a fairly major character, look for outside confirmation, such as funeral rites and permanent changes in other people's lives, that s/he is indeed dead. The opinion of the character him/herself is usually prejudiced (like with the Drake. Linda Deneroff nearly went for my head when first reading the CP draft 'cause just after reading the part where the Drake assumes he and Fae-ter will die in hyper-space, Linda left for an extended recovery stay with her parents and spent 3 weeks assuming that that was so before she got back to the ms.). I did want to leave Iain in such a position that he could well be dead at the end of CP, in case I never wrote anymore TW. As it turned out, the additional stories for the Collected did not have him in any of them, but Linda did request a timeline, so the truth about his condition came out. Of course, metaphysically, one could say that Iain aVairly died that day since Iain Diamond does buy it doing something heroic two years later, a development that would have given aVairly the heavens...(and I can guarantee that if ever a Whill tries to make a soppy ballad out of those events, that Whill is going to have a really verbally vindictive ghost on his case).

Melanie the G: I'm just reading THE POWER OF SILENCE now. As for where it all ends--the Saga or our reality? Since I like happy endings as much as anyone, I would hope that the Saga ends with a return to tolerance and the ability for sentient life to balance its existence in space with its various terrestrial realities. In our own reality, I hope that humanity is indeed taking its first baby steps toward a synthesis of its standing mythologies, East and West, into a mythology that shelters the best of all while providing a structure for sanity and respect for Life as we begin our inevitable exploration of space.

Melanie the R: Your discussion of how pop culture influences name choice reminds me of how, with the advent of "The Ballad of Davey Crockett" 'way back in 1954, schools were inundated with Davids 6 years later. My mother was furious with the show since she had chosen David, an unusual name in our neighborhood, for my brother just weeks before the TV show came out.

As for other sorts of name calling, you Angelino, you know darn well I didn't mean making Leia eat gravy and ice cream together. Bleh. May Harlan Ellison review your books kindly.

Tim Blaes: I most certainly will not explain that phrase, sir. What phrase? I didn't say any ridiculous phrase like that. Nope, nein, never and no how. Harumph.

Regarding the debate over Picard's so-called wimpiness, as OWK observed when our heroes confronted something bigger and more powerful than the Falcon, there are other ways than fighting. Picard's wits are in his head, not his fist. At least ST:TNG is making an occasional attempt to be less hypocritical about the Federation's peaceful intents. There's an Australian filk with a chorus that goes: "We come in peace; shoot to kill!", which all too often was a perfect description of Kirk's style of diplomacy.

Perhaps the position of Counselor exists in an attempt to curb such free-style behavior as existed in the previous century? ((Ed: That suddenly provoked an image that the 23rd Century was the Wild West of the Federation, where much lawlessness ruled on the frontiers and the sheriffs were sometimes as much gunslingers as the out

laws. Now, in the 24th Century, "civilization" has come to the galaxy.))

As for the rest of the show, my biggest disappointment is with Roddenberry who seems determined to provide overwhelming evidence that he hasn't grown any since 1968. The episode about the Planet of the Jogging Aryans (credit for that description: Bev Clark) was downright embarrassing. The endless superiority of the Federation is wearying as well as maddening. I keep hearing an undercurrent of "Whew, am I glad we're not as bad/ignorant/strange as those folks" in every episode where nonhuman, nonFed folks are encountered. Terrans may have learned how to live with each other by the 24th Century, but they apparently haven't learned how to put aside their planetary ethnocentricity. I wouldn't mind it so much if it weren't for the hypocrisy. In SW the various prejudices are open and accounted for, and, for all that such is distasteful, at least people don't go around patting themselves on the back over how enlightened they are.

If this is our future, then we Terrans will still have a bad case of cultural imperialism. The only difference is that we'll direct it at non-Terrans then.

Barbara Gardner: Believe me, we won't have to wait for the next movie for people to glom onto Vader. I may be dating myself, but I remember very well when, next to Solo, Vader was the major object of affection under discussion in the letterzines. (Anyone else remember all the bad jokes about pushing Darth's buttons?) ((Ed: Vader was number one on my list of lust objects when ANH came out. It wasn't until TESB that I suddenly got it bad for Han. I remember sitting in the theater with my tongue hanging out whenever Darth was on-screen, thinking, "What a bod!")) I'll even venture to say that the pro/anti-Vader theme, with the undercurrent of astonishment at/agreement with his erotic appeal, was the first hot debate in SW fandom. Following closely was the fighting between those who supported the Empire (the destruction of Alderaan as a reasonable military move considering its support of terrorists was a big topic of discussion) and those who counted themselves rebels (who, for some reason, never seemed to have arguments as coolly logical as the Imps, not to mention not having the neat uniforms at conventions).

Oh, for the writers among us, I've discovered a book that is both a delightful read and a fascinating source of inspiration for alien societies: THEY HAVE A WORD FOR IT; A LIGHTHEARTED LEXICON OF UNTRANSLATABLE WORDS AND PHRASES by Howard Rheingold. This book presents words and phrases that removes one from the mindset of English and the culture English describes and lets the brain explore and wander through other ways of looking at the world. Absolutely wonderful.

To sign off with, here's yet another quote I found and liked, and that I think is applicable to the differences between the good guys and the bad guys in Lucas' saga.

In response to those who say the world is divided into winners and losers:

"There's another group. The heroes. They are the people who know that hitting a baseball or being Miss Bluegrass is really just a joke. They know that life is one heartbreak after another but it doesn't stop them. They don't pick out anything easy to do. They try to find something worthwhile and then they do it, knowing full well in the end that everybody dies. They've seen life for what it is, and they still go on...they see the bad, but they see the good, too. They're tough as hell...

"Winners are specialists. They stumble on something they can do well and they do it over and over again obsessively. They keep away the dark and the terror that way. The winners live in a dreamworld. They tend to be indifferent to others."

From ALMOST FAMOUS, David Small.

Dr. Mary Urhausen
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April 25, 1988

This has got to be something of a world's record: it's a whole week yet til deadline for SE#19! Almost... spooky, isn't it? Well, don't get too excited. This is still going to be short, inarticulate and generally hodge-podge, so there hasn't been any drastic change!

Bev Clark: Interesting speculations on Luke and Leia's upbringing. I have to agree with your summarizing statement: it is hard to imagine any scenario in which Ben knew about Luke, but not Leia! But it does seem as though we're supposed to assume that he didn't know about Leia-- or at least until Yoda perhaps tells him about her, after Luke leaves Dagobah to go to Bespin (how else would Ben know all about Leia when it comes time to reveal the truth to Luke in ROTJ?). ...Just another of many annoying little inconsistencies!

Marti Schuller: You are not the only one who writes out their first drafts in longhand--I do, too. I don't own a word processor, and (as my letters will attest) I really can't think or compose at the typewriter. So I always do a rough draft in longhand, and then revise and re-revise it all in longhand. By the time I type it, it only receives minor alterations. For all those of you who say, "But doesn't that take a lot of time?", all I can say is, "Not as much as sitting there staring at a blank sheet of paper in the typewriter, unable to think without a pen in my hand!" Half of what I write in a first draft gets tossed anyway; but just the physical act of putting marks on paper keeps me thinking. Sometimes I feel like the Andy Rooney of fanfic, but whatever works, eh?

Melanie Rawn: Uh-oh...you have revealed the Sacred Truth: we do write first and foremost for ourselves! And so we should (can you imagine trying to satisfy the divergent points of view of hundreds of SW fans?? Chaos!). What's more, I think most of us would keep writing even if no one liked or even read what we produce, for just the reasons you mention: we want to know what happens, how it ends, what we missed between films, etc. And since fandom is not only not lucrative, it can actually be quite expensive, it's a good thing we write for ourselves! I would hate to rely too heavily upon an extrinsic system of rewards to make it all worthwhile. This way, when it's right for us, it's right!

Everyone who was offended by my remarks in SE#18 will be happy to know I'm not going to loose any more serpents this time! And for everyone who has been asking about my "baby", Gypsy is now ten weeks old (foaled February 15), hale, hearty, and beautiful--and distinctly unthrilled when she has to "dress up" (wear her halter!). Needless to say, she is spoiled. ((Ed: See picture of Gypsy and her mom elsewhere in this issue.))



Sarah Cohen
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April 21, 1988

Hi all! I would have written this a bit earlier, but I've been working on the school musical. In fact, tonight is our opening night. (Homework? What's that?) Anyway, I get to do props, which means dealing with dumb actors and really stupid actors, and then dancers! I won't even talk about the dancers! Plus a director who is more than mildly deranged! But enough dithering.

How are you? I hope you're all well, etc., etc.

To plunge right in...

Mary U.: As far as I can tell, I would say that the only big difference between heterosexual and homosexual relationships is that a long-term gay relationship isn't very likely to end in marriage, since same-sex marriages are illegal in all 50 states, and religious leaders willing to perform the service aren't all that common. Anyway, this state of affairs leads to less permanence in gay relationships than in straight relationships. Not only do outsiders feel that the relationship is unlikely to last for a long time, but this view spreads even into the gay community. Same-sex relationships are also taken less seriously, at times, than "normal" relationships, for similar reasons, "lover" being a more casual word than "spouse". The feelings involved in a long-term homosexual relationship being, of course, no less strong than those found in any other form.

Cheree: Didn't you know? It's a different universe, and they evolved genetically with shiny lips. Leia doesn't need lip gloss. All Alderaanians are like that.

Congratulations on quitting your job, and good luck with freelancing! My father, a freelance writer ever since he was fired, has claimed that the true purpose of freelancing is not to make money, but instead to be able to still be in your bathrobe at 2 p.m.

My God!! Does Palpatine laugh at the end of ROTJ? Say it isn't so, Melanie G.! What a terrible thought. I'll have to remember to listen for it next time I see the movie. Also, Kenobi as Joe Isuzu? I LIKE. Poor Ben. He does get a lot of bad press: quite a few of the stories I'm reading, although they don't exactly make him a villain, come pretty close. But I suppose he is something of a liar. And you're right, George really hasn't done all that much that's worthwhile except for the SW and Indiana Jones universes. But I have high hopes for WILLOW.

Barbara Gardner: Hi! I'd like to thank you publicly for making those tapes for Irina Ozerney. THANK YOU!!! If you can't guess, she lent them to me. THANK YOU!!! The rest of you may take this sort of thing for granted, but I, being new to fandom, am still overwhelmed by how wonderful, kind, etc., etc. the vast majority of people involved in it seem to be.

While people are discussing how they became involved in SW... I saw ANH when it came out, although I don't think it made a great impression on me. Hey, I was only seven. Around the same time, I read THE HOBBIT and LORD OF THE RINGS, which affected me a bit more. After all, I've been reading imitations ever since. But anyway, by the time TESB came out, I was still vaguely interested, although my recollection of the first movie was rather hazy. I remember being terribly upset by the end of TESB. YEARS until we would find out if Han was all right!!? But I rediscovered both about two years later, when a very good friend of mine developed a huge crush on Harrison Ford. Naturally, I saw ROTJ many times. And bought the book (the worst

novelization of them all). And acted out scenes. I don't have any embarrassing "What's a zine?" stories, because my Ford-fan friend went in first and has only slowly been converting me. I also read a lot of fantasy and somewhat less science fiction.

My ideas about the Saga aren't too definite--I'm open to persuasion. But I do have a few questions. Such as "What about the emperor?" He's only the most powerful single character in the galaxy; even Yoda won't face him. And he and Ben talk to Luke about facing VADER, not the emperor. So, who's supposed to get rid of Palpatine? Leia, maybe? His Force potential has to be enormous. But I would guess the opposite of Maggie Nowakowska, that in fact Palpatine just USES the Force, that he's had no, or minimal, training. He knows enough to use his power, and that's it. He understands it on an emotional level, but not a philosophic/intellectual level. And the lack of training might lead to a lack of self-control and general power-hunger, and might also explain some of the really stupid things he does at the end of ROTJ. I really think that Luke would have killed Darth and turned, if only Palpatine hadn't come sidling up to him, foaming at the mouth and hissing and cackling and saying things like, "Kill him and you will complete your journey to the Dark Side!" (or whatever) and generally reminding Luke of the consequences of his actions. Then, after Luke turns him down, the emperor is so intent on destroying him that he CAN'T do anything about it when Vader picks him up and throws him down the shaft. (By the way, was anyone else disappointed with the face we saw when Vader's mask came off? I may not know what Anakin/Vader looked like, but I know it wasn't THAT.)

I seem to have progressed from a question to a general diatribe on my own ideas. Oh, well, no one's making you read this letter. I think that the Republic's simply collapsed. It got too big and generated an impossibly huge and corrupt bureaucracy. Also, it was always a rather loose organization and systems kept dropping out. Palpatine steps in to fill a power void and to bring order to the galaxy: local governments were starting to use force to settle their disputes, instead of diplomacy. (The Republic's central government was more like the United Nations than a real government.) These were the Clone Wars, called so because they were the first wars in which clones were widely used as soldiers. This was not a good idea, because it led to wholesale slaughter of troops--after all, you could always make more! It wasn't the loss of troops which led to the abandonment of this idea. The machinery that they took with them was too costly to replace. Anyway, once Palpatine has control of the army (navy?), he can quiet things down and the grateful populace, at the...er...suggestion of the armed forces, declares him emperor.

I would suggest that in the course of making the galaxy safe for autocracy, the emperor feels morally obliged to get rid of the Jedi, too. And perhaps the Jedi were getting a bit too lazy and over-confident, so that it wasn't as difficult as it should have been for Palpatine to start arranging little "accidents" for them. Given the state of the Republic and the Jedi, it is not unlikely that anyone with half a brain could have guessed the outcome. Perhaps Anakin noticed this and went over to Palpatine's side, before anyone realized that Palpatine was Dark. (After all, since P.'s Force-gift was so strong, unless he was shielded, the Jedi would have

recruited him.)

Does anyone else out there secretly wish that Luke had joined forces (no pun intended) with Vader in the end of TESB and that the two of them had managed to get rid of Palpatine? It would have been interesting, to say the least...

I hope you're feeling better, Carolyn G. What in the world did you have? It sounds terrible!

Catherine Churko: Are you sure you heard right? SW#1 finished?! I'll believe it when I see it. Anyway, I liked your comments on the "New Physics". Certainly the idea of the Force having a Light Side and a Dark Side fits in well with the ideas of complementarianism (I've forgotten the word, I think): two things that would seem to be mutually exclusive but in fact cannot exist separately. And perhaps the Force is some manifestation of that "consciousness" that particles in quantum physics seem to have. Or perhaps it is some sort of "fifth field"? And doesn't the very act of believing strongly in something cause it to exist, in some form? One purpose of any creative work is to shed some sort of light on the human experience, so nothing is truly "escapism". It's just a different way of looking at reality.

Anyway, I hope that I will have seen many of you at MediaWest! (Aren't tenses fun?) Until next time...

Preconceptions

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April 24, 1988

Well, still another reason for not LoCing a letterzine in awhile is creeping mundania in the form of illness, work, school, family, etc. People who tend to look upon fans with "unease" at their state of mental togetherness fail to realize that a good many fans have more interests and more involvement in the community about them than do most non-fans. The old concept of: if you have an important job to do, give it to a busy person. The more you do, the more you seem to squeeze into life to do more things.

Fans do not worry me so much as do the more mundane aspects of our society who are unwilling to look at new ideas and who tend to use preconceptions and assumptions based on those preconceptions as the basis for judging those who are different than they in their interests, life styles, belief patterns, etc.

The article in #17--"As Time Warps By"--has inspired these thought patterns. Too, I notice how the author uses preconceptions on what "fanzines" are in his article as well. When an apparently knowledgeable fan appears on the scene to impart some information, the author assumes fanzines to mean the likes of STARLOG. Most SF fans look down on that magazine and would not be caught with an issue in their house. For someone to judge SF or media fanzines based on that slick presentation geared to mass appeal is not cognizant enough of the issue on which they are writing to make an intelligent decision on whether to feel uneasy about it or not.

Yes, there are some fans who base too much of their life on fandom, but this is true of all hobbies, be it golf, computers or fandom.

Too, there is certainly a lack of investigative reporting

when it is stated that "even the passionate Star Wars fan doesn't take its mythology all that seriously." That would seem to negate numerous discussions within the pages of this letterzine alone, not to mention some excellent fan writing.

No, fans don't put me so much at unease as those who put down words in professional magazines which people tend to take as being as infallible as those words written down in stone for Moses.

Maggie Nowakowska: Indeed, the major draw of SW to me is the very essence of the New Agism inherent within its story line. Using the Force could be linked with the use of meditative practices: mind over matter. In many of the so-called New Age writings is the quest for self-knowledge. This is the search which I see in SW. It is the real quest for the Jedi. Before you can know others, you have to know yourself. This is what Luke found out when he ventured into the underground cave in TESB. Han could even be said to have undergone a meditative inner search during this carbonization. That term, "carbonization," could be used to mean a form of life endowment. Carbon freeze meaning life freeze.

You could also look to space travel itself as a form of "out of body" travel. You are suspended in nothingness. There is no pull of gravity to make an "up" or "down". There is only that which you yourself create. This helps to define reality versus illusion and makes you aware that landscapes about you can be constantly shifting and you are the one who has to find your own inner reality to combat this constant change of what you know to be up to seem to be down!

It could also be interesting to look on Han and Chewie's relationship in the shamanistic view. What if Chewie were metaphorically Han's spirit animal/personna? His guardian spirit so to speak? I think that would be a fascinating tangent upon which to travel.

Ming Wathne: Change is the name of the game. If we did not change, we would not live. The status quo is non-change and that is death. Yes, Han has changed, just as both you and I have changed/evolved during the course of our lives. Circumstances may have something to do with that change. What circumstances made Vader become Vader in the first place and then what set of circumstances made him revert to his true self? Yes, Han had a mask of vulnerability. He needed that mask/costume/metaphor to function in the world he inhabited. However, when he was given a viable alternative choice, he opted for the change. He could have rejected the metamorphosis, but he did not. To me, this means a growth of character. It takes strength to show vulnerability be it in the form of an open declaration of love or in some other way. Han allowed himself to make that step over the line in a showing of what he might at one time have thought of as a weakness. Don't forget I am a staunch Han fan. I find this change a very positive trait and it is one of the reasons I like his character so much. He was able to make this change.

Just because the current generation may not be any more or less "me centered" than others, does not mean it is not so. Isolationism is me-centered and geocentric theories are me-centered. That I suppose sets a historic precedence for such a thing. However, the Yuppie generation does seem to think of their paychecks to a great extent and to think of keeping that which is theirs. Think of the votes made to quash social programs because the monetary cost might be too much, while at the same

time expending huge amounts of money on defense budget which may or may not be working. We, as a society, have stepped back from social issues in the past few years. I do hope we are now and will continue to reverse that illogic. For in the long run, not spending money on such matters and not caring about what happens to the less fortunate in our society will cost us more than we could possibly imagine.

Again, the argument being made about the need to foster growth through a change in the way we look at things. In this case, through the eyes of others, SW speaks of this need for a unity, a oneness--something which overcomes a strictly egocentric look at the world.

To get back to Han again, you can almost see this transition in the film. He at first has the appearance of a self-centered being. Later this image becomes blurred until he officially accepts command in the rebel alliance and hence declares the transition--the circle--the cycle completed.

As to K/S fiction, I stated when it first started and will continue to voice the familiar words of "I may not agree with what you say but will support until the death your right to say it." Actually, I don't mind K/S fiction as an alternate universe type of thing. Heck, I've even written something that appeared in THE NAKED TIMES and may do such a thing again. I see K/S fiction as simply being an extrapolation upon a theme. ST fiction has been around for a while and there are times when different branches are needed to keep the tree well shaped and healthy. Long may ALL branches of fandom flourish!

For now...PEACE.

Slash Fiction

Tim Blaes
Route 6, Box 294
Hendersonville, NC 28739-9659

April 28, 1988

I've been developing an interest in Japanese animation for some time now, and some of you might have a passing interest in a series called BUBBLE GUM CRISIS. It's not an easy show to describe; sort of BLADE RUNNER meets THE TERMINATOR meets JEM, and maybe a touch of MAX HEADROOM. It's about government sponsored vigilantes (huh?) who are also a female pop-rock group. They use the most highly advanced combat hardware, patrolling Mega-Tokyo, fighting bio-mechanical soldiers, under the code name of--get this--"Knight Saber." And yes, the Knight Sabers carry lightsabers.

Inspired by your example, I included clippings from magazines and newspapers in my letterzine. Most of the readers who have mentioned them like my doing this. But one took me to task, accusing me of stealing money out of the hands of starving writers. How should I regard this?

((Ed: I've never had a problem about reprinting clippings and have never had any qualms about doing so. Perhaps a group of copyright lawyers fighting it out in court could narrow it down to the hair's breadth of the law, but it seems to

me that clippings released to a mass audience such as in newspapers and magazines go into the public domain and therefore royalties are not due in such instances of reprints. We are, after all, not making a penny's profit on our zines so there aren't any profits/royalties to pass along. I wouldn't worry about the sour grapes letters you received. There will always be doomsayers out there who aren't having any fun out of life and are determined that the rest of us won't either!))

Dr. Mary Urhausen: The distinctions I made between gay men and women are indeed generalizations. But I did not say that gay men don't have lasting relationships, or that women always do, but in comparison, different tendencies can be noted. The point I was trying to make was that sexually men and women are different, and the same can be said about gay men and lesbians. And there are some proven differences between men and women, some physiological, some sociological, some debatable as to which.

I can't lay claim to the broadest research on the subject, but I do have at least one first hand example. I know one gay fan who has read his fair share of fanzines, including K/S. His feeling was that most of it was badly written, and out of touch with the gay male. If K/S were written by gay men for gay men, it would look at whole lot different. But "/" fiction is written by women, be they heterosexual, bisexual, or lesbian, and they write about what they feel, not what they know. "/" fiction fills a need in some fannish women's lives, but these are not realistic relationships they are writing about; they're not supposed to be. And that is the point I've been trying to make.

I had also asked my gay friend about my observations about gay men and women. He has been around, and I half-expected him to blow my conclusions out of the sky. Instead, he said I was dead on the money, as far as he could tell. So there, naaah!

Maggie Nowakowska: BEAUTY AND THE BEAST is one of the mushiest shows I have ever seen. I hate mush! I love BEAUTY AND THE BEAST. I'm so confused!!

Melanie Guttierrez: "How did your father die? Uh...Darth Vader killed him. Yeah, that's the ticket! Vader killed him, and your mother, Morgan Fairchild."

My mother's true first name is Harriett, but she never liked it and goes by Louise instead. So, if I ever do name my first daughter Modesty, I'd give her a nice, normal first or second name to use if she didn't want to go by it. Something like Brunhilde or Roxanne. I really don't understand why any one would go out of their way to name their kid something overused, like Tom, Dick, Jane or Mary Sue. Katharine Elizabeth Cargill sounds quite fine to me.

Sarah Cohen: Gee, I don't think anyone reading this zine would know about a book as obscure as THE HERO WITH A THOUSAND FACES, but you're right. Maggie would probably find it fascinating.

You love cross-universe stories? Too bad you missed my lists of cross-universe stories I'd most like to see, that have appeared in past issues of SE. In fact, I feel the urge to do another one: VINCENT VS. THE TERMINATOR--a case of mistaken identity and the cyborg stalks Catherine through the tunnels (if you want to try for a B&B/ST story, perhaps Vincent is a displaced Caitian). GHOST-BUSTERS VS. BEETLEJUICE--no comment. STARMAN MEETS THE PHOENIX--ditto. STINGRAY MEETS (fill in the blank)--who

knows how many people who Ray a favor? THE SHADOW CHASERS MEET CARL KOLCHAK from THE NIGHT STALKER--they're probably old friends. Most of these are just out of my mind and no one has done them yet. But looking through a copy of DATAZINE, I have found listings for GREATEST AMERICAN HERO/I SPY, THE BIONIC WOMAN/ROCKFORD FILES, a ST/Pern story, and a STINGRAY/Andy Griffith crossover. And in the tenth, adult issue of the zine ABODE OF STRIFE, there will be an ALF/Leia story.

Catherine Churko: Remember the WILD CARDS series of books I mentioned a while back? In it, Jetboy's last known words are, "I can't die yet. I haven't seen 'The Jolson Story.'" I'm sure we can paraphrase this for our own use.

I really don't understand all this hostility directed at Wesley. All this talk about wishing a painful death makes me uncomfortable, for some reason. The Next Generation is still in its shakedown cruise, so cut the kid some slack and let him live to become something more developed than he was in those first episodes.

As of this writing, Tasha Yar has not yet been killed by a creature that looks like an oil slick. It also looks like a reject LOST IN SPACE monster. What a stupid way to go.

I stand behind Richard Dreyfuss 100%! I haven't even read most of the article you've reprinted. "Opie-Wan Kenobi"?

Did anyone answer that "Attention SW Fans" ad you reprinted on page 23? ((Ed: Beats me. Carol Peters forwards most of the stuff I reprint out of the LA TIMES.))

Why the hell didn't anyone tell me you had a stroke!! Yeah, I know that isn't what you really had, but why wasn't I told anyway? Am I off the gossip lists, or something? Anyway, I'm glad you are better. But, if your arm falls off or you catch leprosy or something, please let me know so I can send you a card. ((Ed: Thanks, Tim. I appreciate the thought. As to how gossip gets around fandom, I'm at a loss, too, since I don't exactly get on the phone and call everyone I've ever known to tell them I'm sick. In fact, in the spirit of Vulcan stoicism, I usually try to keep it quiet. Generally, only a few very, very close friends know if anything serious lays me low. I enjoy getting a card or letter or call expressing concern, but I always wonder, "How did s/he find out?"))

I hope this is short enough for you. Apologies to anyone I didn't talk to. Everyone had something interesting to say, even if I couldn't say something interesting back. But the truth is, I make better pizza than sense, anyway, so I'd better say goodnight. Hope to you see at MediaWest.

I don't want to set the world on fire--

I just want to light a fire in your heart...

The Other

Chris Callahan
6101 Seminole Street
Berwyn Heights, MD 20740

April 27, 1988

It's hard to believe Katy is nearly a year old already! Seems like just a few months ago I heard about her arrival. And

getting cuter every month, too.

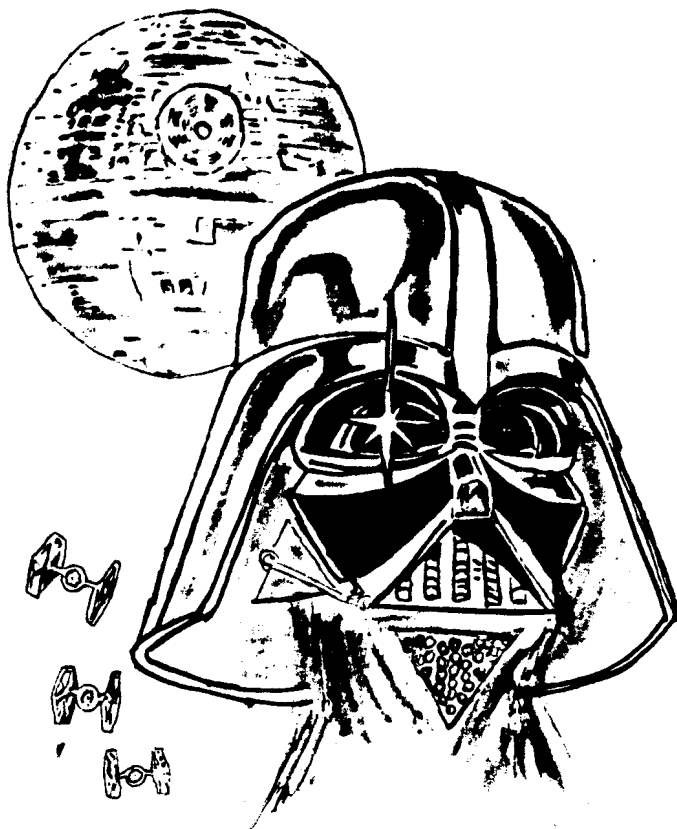
SE#18 was fascinating reading, as usual.

Re Bev Clark's question about Obi-Wan's ignorance of Leia as "the other", let's try this: Luke, born first, was a very strong Force talent, and Obi-Wan simply didn't notice Leia's potential when she was born several minutes later with a less obvious talent. Maybe it's naturally a bit stronger in males, at least to begin with. Or perhaps (luck of the genetic draw), Luke simply happened to inherit it more obviously, while Leia would need the proper stimulus and/or training to make her potential an actuality.

I liked Melanie Rawn's suggestion about the early Darklighter family being involved with the power system. As for Biggs, her suggestion about the Force makes it perhaps significant that Biggs in the novel told Luke about the importance of joining the Rebellion--he could have been another factor in the sequence that led to the destruction of the Dark Side's power, at least temporarily. Real story possibilities here...

Thanks for the clippings section. More work for you, but a welcome chance at seeing items of interest that would otherwise be unavailable.

Ford fans: if you haven't already seen FRANTIC--go! He's even better in this than in WITNESS. Got excellent reviews, too.



Catherine Churko
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April 25, 1988

Happy spring, everyone! (I don't care if this doesn't see our mailbox until June sometime.) Finally there are flowers (ah!) and trees getting pale green new leaves (ooo!). May we all flourish. Speaking of flourishing, I hope the Universe has kicked in its 50% for your job hunt, Cheree, for something more worthy of your efforts. And another kind of flourishing, when you don't see them constantly, it's always a surprise to see a baby growing up and Katy looks like she's doing just fine!

I don't know how anyone else feels but this quarter for lettering feels "odd" because the letter will come out way after a bunch of us will be hanging out here and there at MediaWest, talking and getting instantaneous communication. Hope we all get (got) there.

Linda D.: Hi ya, expatriate. Hmmm, I don't really think I ever made the connection of Vader chasing the Falcon 'cause he got a "Forcewhiff". I think I had some vague idea that he was chasing the Falcon because it was the ship that blasted him on the DS. (Thus causing Luke to make it.) I suppose that might be militarily irresponsible, though, huh? There are no lines in that point in the movie, that he is chasing someone with the Force, are there? (I'm too lazy to plow through the novel now.) I don't think at that point as they take off from Hoth that he's had his little holographic tete-a-tete with the Emperor yet.

We don't know how Vader found out it was Luke. (Except for the comicbook series version.) The idea of Force users acting as catalysts with other latent Force users is interesting (and I think has had some bandying about in SE). It makes sense since Vader didn't react to Leia on the DS, of course, unless you subscribe that the Force is only measurable in use.

But I don't think Force usage is linked up with that perhaps because Luke can feel the extra darkside emanations from the cave on Dagobah, and the cave wasn't "using" the Force. I think you could measure a person's usage, but I also think you can feel the potential or that a person is Force sensitive. Maybe you need a certain level of skill to sense other Force sensitives or users. Then you have Jenni H's and Samia's universes where it appears that Force sensitivities blossom at certain ages (with precociousness, too).

Maybe Leia had a sort of mind block on her until it happened, though that would have to take a lot of things into account. Here's an interesting thought...did Yoda see enough percentages of the future to hedge on Luke being the one to be revealed? I know Ben was watching Luke. What if Leia had decided to land on Tatooine with the droids? Were there are futures-in-motion that showed Leia revealed before Luke or the two of them meeting up before everyone had "planned" them to?

Debbie: Oh boy! You made it to Star Tours, lucky you. (I've not been to Calif. in 9 years.) I have seen the posters. I like the "Endor" one as my fave.

Marti: Hopefully, as you pointed out, us neos and nearly neos will do/have done some buttheadng of our own at MWC and then go razz our venerable "elders" of SWzinedom as well. I love hearing how a SWzinefan has gotten to be one, especially us more latebloomers who didn't come up/be connected in the ranks of Trekdom or SF fandom. We kind of wandered in by accident or semi-purpose. It will be/have been only my second visit to MW and I still feel neoish (but somewhat less so now).

Mary: You ol' slimy swamprat, dragging everyone through

the muck and mire. Is that what Midwestern winters do to people? (Powers, I love it, heh heh heh.)

My first contact with the Big LFL "brouhaha" was finding my first zine (EMPIRE REVIEW) which contained a reprint of Maureen Garrett's two letters going out to zinedom/publishers...5 years AFTER the fact.

I just reread them and, well, yeah, they do sound scary, legality-wise. (The zine was from '81 and I was reading it in '86, first time.) I could feel the "effect" of "looking-over-the-shoulder-itis", see it perhaps still being a factor. ("Dear Dr. Mary, I've been having this strange urge to look over my shoulder lately...but nothing seems to be there...am I losing it? signed Worried") I also admit to having a streak of nose-thumbing since my views definitely seem to diverge from the LFL PoV.

I'm not sure where the "line" is drawn by LFL from the stories I've read over the past year and a half. I haven't been offended. Was anyone ever hauled off into a legal suit by LFL over this issue? The Swedish (?) story I heard vaguely described sounded like something that might've offended me, especially if it went on and on. But in SF, I've read some pretty rough stuff in service of the plot, so? Who knows? There are things that do offend me or make me react strongly against them.

Yes, I found much to sympathize and admire in Leia. Occasionally, I didn't like her being so "bossy" but I don't like it in men either! I wasn't completely "glad" she got Han only because, since I favored Luke and so L&L, at the end of all twists didn't "get" each other. (But never let it be said taht I can't get off on a good Leia & Han story.) With GL deciding (I read in some interview with him) that having a love interest for Luke would have been too distracting or whatever to the plot--that didn't leave much room! I think I remember one comic episode early on (post-ANH) that had a scene that implied a small but not just platonic/familial attraction for Luke and Leia, but I can't find it so maybe I'm imagining things.

I only wanted badly to have the scene in ROTJ where Luke reveals to Leia what happened on DSII. It felt incomplete in that way that we don't see Leia's reaction though I guess plotwise, depending on how Leia reacted (and there's plenty of good post-ROTJ fanfic that plays it out in many different ways), she would have had to reacted acceptingly on some level, otherwise we would have had an immediate "loose-end" if she went into an adverse reaction. (And as a whole other scene(s), I wanted to see Luke teachy Leia as a Force user. I'm glad there's been some of that in post-ROTJ fanfic.

Maggie: Hi! I have never been happy, from the time I first wandered into SF fandom, however tentatively, through LOCUS, SCIENCE FICTION CHRONICLES, and a couple of other magazines, way before I ever set foot at any kind of SF con, with the term "mundane." Almost everyone I've ever explained SWzinedom to (from family to friends or co-workers and even strangers) have been mildly to enthusiastically positive. I feel that it's a tit-for-tat kind of term and keeps a cycle of invalidation going. SF fans ostracized by general society so they turn around and call that society "mundane." I've gotten wonderful support as I made my way trepidatiously (as well as excitedly) into SF fandom and SWzinedom from people that would be considered mundanes. (I have a variety of theories as to why I've gotten that response.)

Lin: Glad you've come back with "joyful abandon". I think I've seen one of those early Palpatine stories but

not read it yet. (I'm still not done with last year's MWC stack.) Oh, yes, I'd love to see some of those outtakes and edited out scenes, etc., from the trilogy.

Barbara: I'm glad you pointed out the "then the Emperor's already won" line. It seems pretty obvious to me, anyway, the implications.

Melanie G.: Strong opinions! I won't pass judgment on Kenobi until I see(?) his (and his compatriots) story in #1-#3. I still like him in spite of all the heavy opinions leveled against him by some. I feel there is tragedy he's endured compounded by the facts of his own mistakes, that probably lead to much of the tragedy in the first place.

As for George...I really don't know what his ego-state is. I'd love to see all 9 films done, at least I'd like to see all 9 in print form if nothing else. But GL has said he won't just do the books without the films. (My nasty hope is that, if he doesn't write all the stories and refuses to publish them, that somehow they do get out in the marketplace...that's the "darkside" talking.) If the man decides he doesn't want to, gotten tired of SW, what are you going to do? You're an artist--what if your gallery, agent or clients wanted to buy or have you only do what they wanted, even if you wanted to change directions?

I want to see all nine films because it just looks so darn great up on the screen. But I'd settle for books nicely, thank you. But if he doesn't do it, it's frustrating not to see the author/midwife complete the story since he started it. But I subscribe to the conflicting feeling of I'd really want to see his completion of the story yet I've gotten off on author's other endings and beginnings and felt them to be solid in each of their versions. I think fanfic has generated strong creativity and essences (as the "other" Melanie said); if they didn't believe in their own versions as they (the writers) wrote them then there's be no way we would feel the stories' realness.) So I carry several SW universes around from George's to others' and my own in my head and each, with all their inconsistencies to one another, feel real to me.

I've probably been over picky about fantasy genre, past my real early childhood favorites. I got hooked on Tolkein and I guess nobody else's High Elves and wizards, etc., really do it for me. I usually end up muttering "second rate Tolkein" to myself. (I realize some literati consider Tolkein second-rate, but maker knows I can't follow their reasons.) Not until I read the Darkover series did I become fully enamored with a different fantasy universe. In fantasy films, my suspension-of-belief is very quickly shaken, so I'm not one for very even-handed opinions in fantasy books or, worse, films.

And since your last comments sort of lead neatly into the next communique, I'll add if you want to check out a fascinating long-range where-are-we-going-in-SW-Force-doings (among all the other nifty things), read A NEW CHALLENGE and REVENGE OF THE SITH by Ellen Randolph.

Melanie R.: Hil I just want to publicly praise your 2 novels. The neat political maneuverings which I can read but have no capacity to create on my own. The terrifying and wondrous images you've conjured up (a feast for illoers!) and the amazing twists and turns that went behind these images. And humor, too! Two lush, lyrical, thought-provoking and (ahem) Force-ful novels. Thanks for a great read...maker, I plowed through those! By the time this is in our hands I hope to have curled up with SANCTUARY, as well. I also appreciate authors whose landscapes "come alive" as well as all other beings, in their descriptiveness.

Your words about generating belief in a writer's universe were eloquent and on target. Even the sticky character Pov.

And, in case you didn't get it, that Krayt in the cartoon was for you.

Sarah: Oh boy! More fellow neos, welcome! (Ah...we love our "elders" but it's great to know we neos aren't alone in arriving way down the line.)

I hope I didn't give the impression that I thought Luke was going to have it easy as a teacher (and he has no choice, really, if the Jedi are to be reformed) and fighting as the only/main direction of Jedi training. I, too, think of Jedi healers, scientists, even gardeners and artists of various persuasions. And I've had the luck to run into a few stories with Luke struggling to find more about the Jedi (as in Samia's series, some of Linda Knights' stories and others) and his struggle to come to terms with teaching and him teaching Leia.

Chris: Running out of space but your comments on "feminine ideals", Leia's universe and ours were quite interesting! Even though I chaffed at times (as mentioned above), I still identified with her independence and competency, etc., very much! Yea, Leia!

Cheree: I think I'll pass on the gun show. Not that the sight of someone who "should be" carrying a gun (in Britain for instance, the police don't carry guns if I remember correctly), would I go loopy--but a whole showful? Roomful? Eeps! ((Ed: It's not the "should be's" that worry me; it's the redneck good ol' boys, would be mercenaries, and just plain nuts who show up at the things that freak me out! Give me a nice roomful of pointy-eared, blaster-belted, comic-book-reading SF fans any day!))

Tim: I usually see the characters and have them in simple-to-very-detailed surroundings.

While I don't crop up with special effects usually as I "read" because in my mind I pretty much "see" some kind of filming, I think you doth put ye foot in mouth in generalizing about mine and others interests in FX. I worked in a photo studio that, while it wasn't special effects as-we-know-it in filming, there are illusions which must be created in the set-up of merchandize and their surroundings. I know about multiple blue screening (I believe it might've had its genesis from the pure clear/black contrast films in the printing industry) and the steady-cams, model building, stop-animation, etc. In fact, there was a FX show on TEMPLE OF DOOM in particular that went into fascinating detail on the problems and completions of the cliff hanging scene and the underground mine "railroad" scene. They really explained it all in fascinating detail. ((Ed: "The Magic of Special Effects" on NOVA, PBS.)) I think there are some more than a few of us here in SE that have at least some interest in FX.

Sarah, again: In the end I don't think the darkside is stronger than the light. And although this was not one of my favorite of that cool Aussie Corellian's works, "Above All Shadows" by Carolyn G., it has some of the most soul-lifting passages about the light surpassing the darkside.

And speaking of... **Carolyn G.:** I hope I'll have seen or heard happier tidings of you whence this SE arrives. Force be with you, mate.

Force and farce be with us all!



Carolyn Golledge
6 Burrawang St.
Ettalong 2257
N.S.W. Australia

June 13, 1988

Back at the end of the earth again! Yes, I made it to MediaWest*Con 88! But only with the help of many very special friends. None of you can ever really know how much your generosity and friendship means to me. Since I don't have the words to properly say thank you, I hope someday that I will have the chance to demonstrate in kind. Meantime to all those who made it possible--MUCHAS GRACIAS!

Hard to believe but MediaWest was even more fun this year than last! I didn't even find time out to go to any panels...and I would have loved to give some sage words of advice on the one concerning the use and misuse of medicine when you trash the hero! Anyhow, I don't think there was one night when I got to bed before 3 a.m. Do you have any idea how exhausting it can be to be the sole Corellian responsible for keeping a bunch of incorrigible Jedi under control? Yes, I can imagine the kind of lies they (especially YOU, Marti and Sandi!) will print about me in these pages. But TRUST ME...would I ever behave with anything less than absolute decorum? Those Jedi just have no manner to speak of! Especially when they're trying to impress their relatives. (Darth was shocked! I had to pass him the smelling salts!)

Marti and Sandi's scandalous behavior was worsened by the presence of a new and even more incorrigible Jedi...Sue Zahn. Tut, tut. The things this poor Corellian had to endure. It's

all your fault, Cheree, Liz and Maggie...where were you when I needed a few extra Corellians! One thing you should learn from my painful experience...never ever let a Jedi anywhere near an art auction! The things they use their hocus pocus for would make Obi-Wan turn in his grave (or wherever he is!). Thanks to Barbara Anderson, Wanda Lybarger, Rebecca Carey, Cypher, Irina Ozernoy, Ming Wathne and all who made Ford parties a great way to relax!

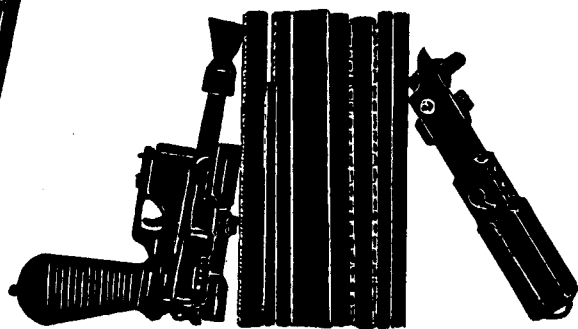
During a five minute nervous breakdown, I bought a couple of zines which I read while enduring earth's version of carbon freeze--30 hours in a 747! Augh! Anyway, I must recommend Mary Jean Holmes' two new stories as the maximum in entertainment value..."Metamorphosis" and "Marginal Error" had me giggling uncontrollably. The airhostess thought I was on the brink of hysteria...so she offered me free cocktails! Thank you so much, Mary!

Can't finish up without giving hearty congratulations to Sandi Jones whose first effort at zine publishing has produced one of the most attractive and readable SWzines yet! (And I should know...thanks to Dianne Smith and Sandi, I got mugged by a bunch of Luke lovers at Denny's!) Anyway, Sandi, you did one hell of a fantastic job with STARQUEST and deserve plenty of kudos...and maybe even forgiveness for illicit use of the Force. (Yeah, I know, I know, it's all Vincent's fault!)

Thanks also for allowing me to give you lessons in housekeeping, Corellian style!

((Ed: A hearty congrats to Carolyn, as well, for the much deserved win of her Fan Q for "A New Meaning" in FLIP OF A COIN #10. It's about time!))





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BLAKE'S DOUBLES (all B7): A brand new B7 zine consisting of two long stories published back to back. The first issue contains: "Out of the Night" by Annita Smith, a 5th season story focusing on Avon, Vila and Blake, and "The Flotsam Chronicles" by Valerie Dickinson & Phyllis Milby, a 5th season story focusing on Tarrant and Vila. Art by Virgil, Rosenthal and others. \$10.00 first class. Ann Wortham, 1402 Allison Avenue, Altamonte Springs, FL 32701.

CHOICE PARTS--(all Harrison Ford). Featuring "Chance Encounter" by Kate Birkel. Tommy Lillard was minding his own business when the strangest looking thing he'd ever seen fell out of the sky--with a beautiful, sharp-tongued princess on board. "The One That Got Away" by Cypher. Han had a lead on the most fabulous jewels in the galaxy. Now, all he had to do was dive to the bottom of an ocean, contact the local piscine inhabitants and convince them to turn over their treasure to him. "Remembrance" by Carolyn Golledge. Han and Leia had returned to Corell to find a sacred icon that had belonged to Han's family, shortly before the family holding was destroyed by Imperial troops. Without it, Han could never proclaim his true identity. Much more by Ann Wortham, Marci Erwin, Jeannie Webster and Elizabeth Wilson. Poetry by Martie Benedict-O'Brien, Pat Nussman, Jacqueline Taero, Patricia D'Orazio, Sarah Macht-Dewitt and others. Art by Wanda Lybarger, Martynn, Dianne Smith, Dani, Jim Markle and Barbara Frances-Simon. Note--some material is slightly on the adult side. \$15.00 first class. Make checks payable to Cheree Cargill, 457 Meadowhill Drive, Garland, TX 75043.

DATAZINE--Datazine contains the most up-to-date information you need to know: fanzine listings, reviews, news, features, LoCs, and more. Datazine is a great value. Even with the rising printing and postal charges, Datazine is still only \$1.67 per issue. You deserve to know what is happening in the world of fanzines and you can trust Datazine to let you know! What are you waiting for? \$6.00 for 3 issues, \$10.00 for six issues, or best value \$15.00 for nine issues. DATAZINE, c/o Steven and KathE Walker, PO Box 24937, Denver, CO 80222.

DRAGON'S TEETH by Carol Hines-Stroede. A novel of the first SW trilogy. Illustrated by Nancy Stasulis. Edited by Joyce Yasner and Devra Michele Langsam. Now available from Poison Pen Press, 627 East 8th Street, Brooklyn, NY 11218. SASE for price information.

FIELD STUDIES II. Features "A Day in the Life" by L. R. Virgil. Let's put it this way...the attempted rape by five co-eds, the subsequent faculty hearing and his summary dismissal from Marshall College was the high point of Indy's day! "Pact With the Devil" by T. S. Weddell. Indy's Jewish colleague has managed to escape from Nazi Germany, but his wife and children are being held there. The price for their release? Indy must retrieve a priceless sacred object for Hitler. "The Crystal Skull" by Cheree Cargill. Indy had only dreamed of ever seeing this incredible artifact, but other parties were determined to have it as well. And everyone overlooked the fact that the skull had a mind of its own. More adventures by Patricia D'Orazio, Ann Wortham,

and Jeannie Webster. Poetry by Martie Benedict and Beth Lentz. Art by Wanda Lybarger, Martynn, Suzy Sansom, Cheree Cargill and Laura Virgil. LESS THAN A DOZEN COPIES LEFT! Special clearance price--\$5.00 first class! Cheree Cargill, 457 Meadowhill Dr., Garland, TX 75043.

FLIP OF A COIN, the fanzine featuring selections based on all characters portrayed by Harrison Ford throughout his career, is accepting submissions of fiction, poetry, cartoons, art, etc., for future issues. Issue #11 is now available. 314 pages of exciting adventures with many of Harrison Ford's memorable characters. Send a SASE for flyer or \$14.75 plus \$2.50 First Class Postage to FLIP OF A COIN, c/o Paula Truelove and Jenny McAdams, Editors, 502 McKeithan St., Apt. 4A, Tallahassee, FL 32304.

GUARDIAN 7 contains two long novellas, "Sabacc!" by Birkel and "In the Passage" by Knights; plus "What Price Friendship?" by Bielowicz; "And He Is Us" by Hines-Stroede; "Pavane for a Dead Princess" by Randolph; "Loose Ends" by Otten & Rosenberg; more. Lots of poetry and art as well. Covers by Hoolahan and Siegrist. 280 pp. offset, reduced, perfect bound. \$12.60 bk sp hd ins; \$18.10, Europe (air); \$20.10, Pacific (air). Linda Deneroff and Cynthia Levine, co-eds. Make checks payable to Mazeltough Press, 1212 E. Howell #6, Seattle, WA 98122. Canadians, please add 50 cents to US rates.

GUARDIAN 6 contains material from over 60 contributors! Here's just a sample: "Returning to the Clan," by Bielowicz (ST); "Member of the Guild" by Birkel (SW); "The Firefly Factor" by Carraher (ST); "High Flight" by Duane (SW); "Cinechrome Reality" by Gonzales (SW/IJ-the sequel to "Hear the Echo Lonely" with permission from Marcia Brin); "The Acolyte" by Hines-Stroede (SW); "Mirror, Mirror" by Hoolahan (SW); "The Mickey Mouse Affair" by Kirby (UNCLE); more. Art by Hawks, Johansen, Martynn, O'Neill, Reitz, River, and Siegrist; poetry and filks by Berman, Bowles, Delapenia, Ecklar, Gatonspaulis, Grant, Heyes, Nuernberg, Nussman and Sacksteder. Covers by Johansen and Walske. 216 pp. offset, reduced, perfect bound. \$10.60 bk sp hd ins; \$14.50, Europe (air); \$16.75, Pacific (air). Linda Deneroff and Cynthia Levine, co-eds. Make checks payable to Mazeltough Press, 1212 E. Howell #6, Seattle, WA 98122. Canadians, please add 50 cents to US rates.

GUARDIAN 5 is a full-length SW novel, "Stormbrother" by Fern Marder and Carol Walske, set more than a year after the end of the victorious revolution. Who is Areth Solo and why are they saying those terrible things about him? Can Yoda and Obi-Wan Kenobi re-establish the balance between the light and dark sides? Covers and artwork by Walske; poetry by Marder. 200 pp. offset, not reduced, perfect bound. \$9.60 bk sp hd ins; \$13.50, Europe (air); \$15.75, Pacific (air). Linda Deneroff and Cynthia Levine, co-eds. Make checks payable to Mazeltough Press, 1212 E. Howell #6, Seattle, WA 98122. Canadians, please add 50 cents to US rates. Save Postage: Order 5 & 6 together for only \$17.80 bk sp hd ins. Order 5 & 7 for \$20.25; 6 & 7 for \$21.25.

HIBERNATION SICKNESS. A new bi-monthly newsletter. Each issue is 16-20 pages filled with fanfic, art, poetry, cartoons, etc. Contributions deadline for October issue is September 1st. \$10.00 for 6 issues in USA, \$14.00 overseas. Sample issue \$2.00. Lisa Thomas, 7606 Lady St., North Charleston, SC 29418.

JUST DESERTS #1. All RAT PATROL zine. Contents include stories by Bartlett, Bryson, Carr, Farnsworth, Knights and

others. Art by Dani, Virgil, and Otten. Contains a SW crossover and an Indiana Jones crossover as well. \$10.00 fc. Make checks payable to Ann Wortham. Correspondence without a SASE will not be answered. Ann Wortham, 1402 Allison Ave., Altamonte Springs, FL 32701.

JUST DESERTS #2 (all RAT PATROL) contains two long stories by Linda Knights, stories by Carr, Horvath, Winters, art by Winters and more. \$10.00 fc. Make checks payable to Ann Wortham. Correspondence without a SASE will not be answered. Ann Wortham, 1402 Allison Ave., Altamonte Springs, FL 32701.

LAST STAND AT THE EDGE OF THE WORLD is once more available as a xerox reprint. Still has a color cover and GBC binding. A BLAKE'S 7 5th season in five parts. Written by Ann Wortham and Leah Rosenthal with art by Dani, Rosenthal, Karen River and Deb Walsh. \$18.00 fc. Make checks payable to Ann Wortham. Correspondence without a SASE will not be answered. Ann Wortham, 1402 Allison Ave., Altamonte Springs, FL 32701.

LOG OF THE HELLHOUND, BOOK I (all BLAKE'S 7): Book I of this ongoing 5th series which originally appeared in SOUTHERN SEVEN #1 is being reprinted along with brand new, never before published material. New cover by Rosenthal. \$10.00 fc. Make checks payable to Ann Wortham. Correspondence without a SASE will not be answered. Ann Wortham, 1402 Allison Ave., Altamonte Springs, FL 32701.

LONGBOW #2--a fan publication based on HTV/Goldcrest's Robin of Sherwood is now available. Featuring stories, songs, poetry, vignettes and an historical perspective from the quills of L. A. Carr, Cindy Fairbanks, Jeanine Hennig, Janice Lamel, Violet Nordstrom, Betty Press, Sue Rutherford, Carol Shorn, Sandy Williams, Tammy Wojtko and the wicked humor of Lynne Taylor. With tapestries embroidered by Laura Virgil, Jim Markle, Sue Rutherford, and others. Print run is limited, so order now! Price per copy is; \$15.00 (in person), \$18.00 first class mail inside the US and Canada), and \$20.00 (Overseas with International Money Order ONLY, Please!). All checks and money orders made payable to: Sue Rutherford, Celtic Hart Press, 2611 Rockbrook Drive, Plano, TX 75074.

POWER OF SPEECH #3 is now available. Biggest issue yet with 44 pages! Includes discussion on BLAKE'S 7, THE PROFESSIONALS, ALIENS, slash fiction, the STAR TREK films and series. Articles: controversial interview with David Gerrold talking about K/S, ST films and series, views on life, etc., conducted by Randall Landers and Tim Farley. Controversial review by Kristie Brady of long-running ST letterzine INTERSTAT. Gorgeous pen and ink cover by Bobbie Hawkins of Spock from "Plato's Stepchildren". Various and sundry items commenting on NASA and the space shuttle. POWER OF SPEECH is a ST/media letterzine dedicated to the uninhibited right of free fannish expression. Civilized controversy is not only welcomed but actively sought. All issues are \$2 each, postage paid (\$3.25 overseas). Xerox copies of #1 and #2 still available for the same price. Free copies available for review. Sales at conventions also sought. Write: Sandra H. Necchi, 4918 Cedar Ave., Philadelphia, PA 19143.

PRESSURE POINT--a new bimonthly newsletter designed to keep you in touch with what's happening in B7 fandom, what US conventions are featuring B7 guests and where, what zines you can buy or submit to, what B7 clubs you can join, in

fact, almost everything that's happening in this growing US fandom, all in a concise and timely form. Each issue features a calendar of events, zine listings, zine reviews, and a marketplace. \$3.00/3 issues, \$6.00/6 issues. For subscription info, please SASE Pat Nussman, 2 J Breezy Tree Court, Timonium, MD 21093.

SANCTUARY--The Odd Life and Bizarre Times of Luke Skywalker by Ellen Randolph. Art by Lybarger, Landon, Siegrist, Stasulis, Martynn, Faddis, Kluge, River, Afton, Holmes, Churko, Fisher and Fisher. 250 pp. Tiny print run; order now. \$22.50 in person, \$25.00 first class. Checks payable to Melanie Rawn. Full Court Press, 15820 Ocean Avenue, Whittier, CA 90604.

SOUTHERN LIGHTS 3.75 (all-BLAKE'S 7) is in print. All slash this time and all A/V. Definitely for adults only and age statement is required. \$9.00 fc. Make checks payable to Ann Wortham. Correspondence without a SASE will not be answered. Ann Wortham, 1402 Allison Ave., Altamonte Springs, FL 32701.

SOUTHERN LIGHTS 4 (multi-media) is now available. Universes featured include B7, WIZARDS 7 WARRIORS, REMINGTON STEELE, SCARECROW & MRS. KING, SIMON & SIMON, MIAMI VICE and more. All the usual contributors. Color cover by Laura Virgil (Avon & Vila). \$19.00 Book Rate, Insured. Make checks payable to Ann Wortham. Correspondence without a SASE will not be answered. Ann Wortham, 1402 Allison Ave., Altamonte Springs, FL 32701.

SOUTHERN LIGHTS 4.5 (all-BLAKE'S 7) is yet another SPECIAL ISSUE. All slash this time and all A/V. This one focuses on all the different characters with both straight and slash material. Definitely for adults only and age statement is required. \$14.00 fc. Make checks payable to Ann Wortham. Correspondence without a SASE will not be answered. Ann Wortham, 1402 Allison Ave., Altamonte Springs, FL 32701.

STAR QUEST--Now available with stories from Golledge, Cargill, Hennig, Schuller, D'Orazio, Whitney, and Jones (of course). Illustrations by some of fandom's best. Send SASE for further information on price to: Sandi Jones, 629B Dana Court, Naperville, IL 60540.

THE WOOKIEE COMMODORE #1: The zine that started it all! Still some copies available. Fiction, articles and poetry by Ripley, Peed, Thomas, Martz, Rogan, Saye and others. Art by River, Peed, Fregni, Carleton and others. Cover by River. \$12.50 first class mail, \$10.00 in person. THE WOOKIEE COMMODORE #2. Winner of the 1986 Fan Q Award for Best SW Zine! Still some copies available. Fiction, articles and poetry by Golledge, Ripley, Cope, Martz and others; art by Lybarger, River, Charvat, Peed, Dani, Bryant, and others. Something to Offend Absolutely Everyone! Perfect bound. \$13.50 in person; \$14.50 book rate; \$17.00 first class mail. THE WOOKIEE COMMODORE #3: Winner of the 1987 Fan Q Award for Best SW zine is sold out. Thank you--and sorry! We are accepting SASEs for a possible reprint of this issue; it would take a minimum of 100 to reprint it, however; and it may not be available for the same price as the original copies. THE WOOKIEE COMMODORE #4 is also sold out. Thank you for your support. Double D Press, Dr. Mary Urhausen, 42 Three Mile Road, Racine, WI 53402.

THE WOOKIEE COMMODORE #5 is here! Featuring fiction by Carolyn Golledge, Carol Moffat, Madalena Mumford, L. A. Carr, Mary St. Cyr, Carrie Keeler, Christine Haire, Ruth Radecki, Marti Schuller, Samia Martz, Karen Ripley and

others. Art by Wanda Lybarger, Melea Fisher, Dianne Smith, Jean Kluge, Dani, Cheryl Mandus, Rebecca Carey, Catherine Churko, and others. Also additional art, poetry, stuff & nonsense, and 1987 Wookiee Commode Consumer's Guide to SW zines by Sharon Saye. We have a color cover, inside and out, sure to quicken the pulse of any SW fans--and the ability to raise Luke fans from the dead! Available now! \$17.00 in person, \$20.00 first class, \$18.50 book rate. Double D Press, Dr. Mary Urhausen, 42 Three Mile Road, Racine, WI 53402.

THOUSANDWORLDS COLLECTED. This is a three-volume limited edition featuring new material, reprinted stories, and background information in this most popular fan-alternate SW universe. Reduced, double-columned, perfect bound. Volume 1 (276 pp) is \$15.00 in person. Add \$2.60 book rate, special handling insured. Volume 2 (336 pp) is \$20.00 in person. Add \$3.75 book rate, special handling insured. Volume 3 (a reprint of SKYWALKER 5) is \$8.00 in person. Add \$3.25 book rate, special handling insured. Foreign orders; SAE + 2 IRCs. Sets are available for \$40.00 in person; \$48.00 book rate, special handling insured. Make checks payable to Mazeltough Press, 1212 E. Howell #6, Seattle, WA 98122.

UP BUBBLE--A new Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea letterzine. Now soliciting letters for first issue. Tentative debut date May 1988. SASE to Kathy Agel, 51 W. 2nd St., Bayonne, NJ 07002.

COMING SOON TO A GALAXY NEAR YOU

A TREMOR IN THE FORCE #4--Back at last with a special Jedi issue! Featuring fiction by Carolyn Golledge, Marcia Brin, Maggie Nowakowska, Judith Tyler, Ruth Radecki, Kate Birkel, Melanie Guttierrez, James Booth, Kerry Nash, Matthew Whitney and more! Art by Wanda Lybarger, Dianne Smith, Dani, Rebecca Carey, Melanie Guttierrez, Catherine Churko and others. Due out this summer. \$5.00 and SASE to reserve your copy. Cheree Cargill, 457 Meadowhill Drive, Garland, TX 75043.

A TREMOR IN THE FORCE #5. Now taking submissions. We already have two outstanding novels in for this issue! Due out next summer. SASE for info. Cheree Cargill, 457 Meadowhill Dr., Garland, TX 75043.

BELOW THE SURFACE is a new Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea fiction zine. We're looking for writers and artists. First issue due out in November 1988. Come on, you Voyage fans, I know you're out there! SASE for info to Kathryn Agel, 51 W. 2nd St., Bayonne, NJ 07002.

BLAKE'S DOUBLES (all B7) is open for submissions of novella length or longer. SASE's accepted for interest, but no deposits please. Correspondence without a SASE will not be answered. Ann Wortham, 1402 Allison Avenue, Altamonte Springs, FL 32701.

FLIP OF A COIN #12. SASE for info. Due out this fall. FLIP OF A COIN, Paula Truelove & Jenny McAdams, Editors, 502 McKeithan Avenue, Apt. 4A, Tallahassee, FL 32304.

GUARDIAN 8 is in need of manuscripts looking for a good home. ST, SW, UNCLE welcome. Please send them to Linda Deneroff, 1212 E. Howell #6, Seattle, WA 98122.

LOG OF THE HELLHOUND, BOOK II: I'm willing to reprint Book II of HELLHOUND, now that SOUTHERN SEVEN 2 is out of print, if there is sufficient interest. Send a SASE if you'd be interested in a copy. Correspondence without a SASE will not be answered. Ann Wortham, 1402 Allison Avenue, Altamonte Springs, FL 32701.

LONGBOW--a fan publication based on HTV/Goldcrest's Robin of Sherwood. Now accepting submissions for future issues. LONGBOW 3--deadline for written work is October 31, 1988, artwork November 30, 1988. Tentatively due out January 1989. Already have several long story submissions for LB3, but need vignettes, poetry, other short pieces, and artwork. We welcome work on both Loxley and Huntingdon, as well as all the characters of the series--the Good and the Evil (yes, even the Sheriff and Gisbourne will be gladly considered). LONGBOW 4 and possible future issues are presently open for all types and lengths of submissions. For information on guidelines and availability, or to place a \$5.00 deposit on LONGBOW 3, send SASE to Celtic Hart Press, c/o S. Rutherford and S. Williams, 2611 Rockbrook Drive, Plano, TX 75074. All checks and money orders made payable to Sue Rutherford.

PROBABILITY SQUARE, a BLAKE'S 7 zine from Gambit Press, is currently in the planning stages. Contributors so far include--Ann Wortham, Julie Kramer, Michele Rosenberg, Dani Lane, Sheila Paulson, Jean Graham, Suzi Lovett, Leah Rosenthal, Theresa Buffaloe, Leigh Arnold and Laura Virgil. The zine will be approximately 250 pp long (reduced type), with a limited run of 200 copies. Due out this summer for Scorpio Con. To reserve a copy, send \$5.00 and legal sized SASE to Laura Virgil, Gambit Press, 2207 Gaylord Drive, Dallas, TX 75227. Correspondence without a SASE will not be answered.

SOUTHERN COMFORT 4.75 (all B7): SOUTHERN LIGHTS SPECIAL ISSUES are now called "Southern Comfort". This issue is all slash, all A/V again, back by popular demand. Stories by Carnall, R. L. Parker, Paula (sequel to "the Bondstone"), Kessler, Tenaya, and others. Gorgeous cover of Vila. \$5.00 + business sized SASE to reserved. Planned for the end of the summer 1988. Remember--a SASE is part of the price. Correspondence without a SASE will not be answered. Ann Wortham, 1402 Allison Avenue, Altamonte Springs, FL 32701.

SOUTHERN COMFORT 5.5 (all B7): This issue already contains quite a number of B/A stories, a few A/V and this time around, quite a few straight stories focusing on various characters. Submissions are still open. Planned for sometime this winter. SASE if interested. again, back by popular demand. Stories by Carnall, R. L. Parker, Paula (sequel to "the Bondstone"), Kessler, Tenaya, and others. Gorgeous cover of Vila. \$5.00 + business sized SASE to reserved. Planned for the end of the summer 1988. Remember--a SASE is part of the price. Correspondence without a SASE will not be answered. Ann Wortham, 1402 Allison Avenue, Altamonte Springs, FL 32701.

SOUTHERN SEVEN 1: I'm considering doing a limited reprint run of S71 if there's sufficient call for one. This reprint would be identical to the original print run except it would not contain Book I of HELLHOUND (as that is now available in a separate reprint edition). If you'd be interested in a copy, send me a SASE. Correspondence without a SASE will

not be answered. Ann Wortham, 1402 Allison Avenue, Altamonte Springs, FL 32701.

SOUTHERN SEVEN 3 (all B7) is planned for the summer. Stories by Carr & Hall, Gerstner, Grundfest, Hotaling, Knights, Mulvey, Snyder & McGhin, Virgil, Willard, and many others. Yet another big one. Art by Dani, River, Rosenthal, Virgil, and more. Note: Some of the stories originally planned for S73 have been split off into S74. \$5.00 + business sized SASE to reserve. Remember--a SASE is part of the price. Correspondence without a SASE will not be answered. Ann Wortham, 1402 Allison Avenue, Altamonte Springs, FL 32701.

SOUTHERN SEVEN 4 (all B7) is planned to debut at the same time as S73 or shortly thereafter. Stories by Carr & Hall, Paulson, Gerstner, Terrell, Mulvey, Hoffman, Sharpe, Virgil, Hintze, and many others. Art by Dani, Lovett, Virgil, and more. Color cover by Rosenthal. \$5.00 + business sized SASE to reserve. Remember--a SASE is part of the price. Correspondence without a SASE will not be answered. Ann Wortham, 1402 Allison Avenue, Altamonte Springs, FL 32701.

SOUTHERN SEVEN 5 (all B7) is planned for the winter. Stories by Paulson, Hintze, Green, Nussman & Taero, Morris & Morris, Janet Walker, Mulvey, Gerstner, Knights, Lorrach, Lantry, Hotaling, and many others. Art by Lovett, Gerstner, Virgil, Rosenthal, Landry, Molnar, Buffaloe, Hotaling and more. \$5.00 + business sized SASE to reserve. Remember--a SASE is part of the price. Correspondence without a SASE will not be answered. Ann Wortham, 1402 Allison Avenue, Altamonte Springs, FL 32701.

THE WOOKIEE COMMODORE #6 is still open for submissions of the ridiculous, sublime, offensive, and wonderful! For submissions guidelines, SASE: Samia Martz, 701 West Hale Lake Road, Warrensburg, MO 64093. Address all other correspondence to Double D Press, Dr. Mary Urhausen, 42 Three Mile Road, Racine, WI 53402.

OTHER WORLDS

ANNUALS, ZINES AND BOOKS FOR SALE. Mostly British media-oriented. STAR TREK, STAR WARS, DR. WHO, BLAKE'S 7, PROFESSIONALS, etc. Send business-size SASE for list. (Note: this list changes constantly. If it's been a while since you sent for it, chances are it's different.) Correspondence without a SASE will not be answered. Ann Wortham, 1402 Allison Avenue, Altamonte Springs, FL 32701.

BUTTONS. Made to order with your picture, so each is a one-of-a-kind item. Keychains and other items are also available. Some photo buttons in stock: subjects include Harrison Ford, ST, SW. For information on these and other collectibles, please send SASE to Helen Clark, 249 Kingston Rd., Lexington, KY 40505.

FOR SALE: H. Ford Album, 20 pages, asst. pub. stills color and b/w. Ranges from 3x5 to 8x10, SW to FRISCO KID. \$25.00 + postage. Contact P.J. at (303) 322-4935 or write to 1650 Wabash, Denver, CO 80220.

IF YOU LIKE HARRISON FORD, you'll love playing "Cliff Hangers", the trivia game which covers Harrison's career

from the beginning through MOSQUITO COAST. Over 600 questions in 23 categories will test your knowledge of Harrison's characters and a supplement on FRANTIC will be available in the spring. Please send \$12.95 ppd or SASE for further information to Helen Clark, 249 Kingston Rd., Lexington, KY 40505.

ZINE SALE: SW, Harrison Ford and some mixed. Must sell due to lack of space and lack of funds. Many out-of-print. For

information, send SASE to Janice Lamel, 6517 West Medalist Circle, Plano, TX 75023.

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457 Meadowhill Drive
Garland, TX 75043

Subscription Price: \$4.00 single issue, \$12.00 for 3 issues or \$16.00 for a year. Please specify issue starting number. Back issues #4-18 available for \$2.00 each. SE#1-3 are sold out.

Deadline for #20 -- November 1, 1988

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